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Religious life in Scotland

RELIGIOUS LIFE IN SCOTLAND;
FROM THE REFORMATION TO
THE PRESENT DAY.

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Preface.

THE ecclesiastical history of Scotland has been often written; but little has been done in the way of tracing its religious life, or of showing, in anything like a systematic manner, how that life has told on the epoch-making movements of the past.

This work does not profess to meet so as to satisfy that manifest want. It is not, and does not pretend to be, a history of Scottish religion. To supply that would require something more elaborate. But it is a contribution toward such a history; and its information may be accepted as of some interest and value, because furnished by men who are, most of them, in a sense specialists in their respective departments.

It will be observed that the largest amount of space is given to the last of the five periods dealt

with—the past half century. The editor's apology for that is, that the subject was so far fresh. The story of the half century has yet to be told, and the outline he has given may be acceptable to those, and they are not few, whose acquaintance with what has been happening during the immediately bygone and current generations is but vague and indefinite.

It is necessary to add that each writer is responsible for only that portion of the volume to which his name is attached.

NORMAN L. WALKER.

Contents.



At the Reformation.

By Professor LINDSAY, D.D., Author of Handbook of "The Reformation."

I. OUTLINE SKETCH OF THE TIME,	11
II. THE RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF SCOTLAND BEFORE THE REFORMATION,	25
III. THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE REFORMERS,	32
IV. THE CHURCH OF THE REFORMATION AND ITS RELIGIOUS LIFE,	39



In Covenanting Times.

By Rev. CHARLES G. M'CRIE, Author of "Studies and Sketches."

I. THE COVENANTING DOCUMENTS,	51
II. COVENANTING LIFE,	59
III. COVENANTING PREACHING,	73
IV. SPIRITUAL OUTCOME OF COVENANTING EFFORT,	77



During the Secession.

By WILLIAM BLAIR, D.D., Author of "Leighton," and Editor of Mackelvie's "Annals of United Presbyterian Church."

I. THE PERIOD,	85
II. ORIGIN OF THE SECESSION,	94
III. TIMES OF REFRESHING,	105
IV. REVIVALS IN THE HIGHLANDS,	119

In the Days of the Haldanes.

By W. LANDELS, D.D., Author of "The Great Cloud of Witnesses."

I. THE MAINSPRING OF THE NEW MOVEMENT,	135
II. THE RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY AT ITS COMMENCEMENT,	139
III. THE CONVERSION AND EARLY LABOURS OF THE HALDANES,	144
IV. OPPOSITION,	154
V. CAUSES WHICH INTERFERED WITH THE PROGRESS OF THE MOVEMENT,	170
VI. THEIR WORK OUTSIDE CONGREGATIONALISM,	182

During the Last Half Century.

By Rev. NORMAN L. WALKER, Author of Handbook of "Scottish Church History."

I. THE RISE OF THE TIDE,	189
II. THE REVIVAL OF 1839-40,	205
III. THE SUMMER OF THE DISRUPTION,	214
IV. CROSS CURRENTS,	227
V. A NEW AWAKENING (1859-60),	243
VI. THE CHURCHES,	255
VII. THE MOODY AND SANKEY VISITS,	272
VIII. RELIGIOUS INTEREST IN THE UNIVERSITIES,	282
IX. THE OUTLOOK,	290

AT THE REFORMATION.

By PROFESSOR LINDSAY, D.D.,

Author of Handbook of "The Reformation."

CHAPTER I.

OUTLINE SKETCH OF THE TIME.

The soul of the Reformation—Its environments—A Scottish people—Lutheran books—Martyrs—Beginning of popular movement—George Wishart and John Knox—The Scots Confession—Queen Mary—Struggle—The Parliament of 1567.

THE great Reformation of the sixteenth century had for its soul a genuine revival of religion; but this soul was incased in a body of fleshly elements.

The Scottish Reformation had the same mixed character. Within, it was a fulfilment of the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon his waiting people. As it appeared in history, the spiritual movement took bodily shape in political and social changes. The Reformers were men who, under the impulse of a great religious afflatus, desired freedom to worship God in their own way, as conscience, moved by Scripture and the influence of the Holy Spirit, demanded. They lived in the midst of peculiar intellectual, economical, and political surroundings; and their simple longing to worship God as heart-religion prompted, involved such changes in the conditions of society that

it is impossible to tell the story of the religious revival without introducing a great deal that seems to belong to ordinary political history.

The Reformation in Scotland was not free to win its way as a simple revival movement. Its course was bent and twisted by the political and social forces between which it flowed; and some of those forces were of a somewhat questionable kind. Everything has its environment, which helps to make it what it actually becomes. The Reformation in Scotland had its environment also.

For generations the foreign policy of Scotland had been enmity to England and friendship with France. The times of the Reformation saw that policy first questioned, then combated, and at last reversed. For generations the kingly power had been overshadowed by the strength of the great feudal nobles, who made periodic revolts, during which the country suffered all the evils of civil war. At first sight the Reformation seemed only a larger war of barons—this time the Lords of the Congregation—against the kingly or central authority; but as the months passed it was found that a new power had come into being, and Lords and Queen discovered themselves face to face with a Scottish people. For generations the medieval Church had been growing in wealth and in that power which the possession of large landed property must always give. The Reformation saw the Church stripped of her estates, and the creation of a large number of

small landed proprietors, who inherited the political power of the impoverished ecclesiastics.

It is impossible to describe the Reformation in Scotland, or in any other country, without taking into account these political and economic changes. There can never be a purely religious history of the Reformation movement.

When the Reformation began in Germany and Switzerland, James V. ruled in Scotland. During his long minority the baronage, unchecked by the controlling presence of a strong central authority, had subjected the land to all kinds of misrule. The whole policy of the king was directed towards curbing the powers of these petty tyrants. This led him to support the Scottish Church (to whose bishops he trusted for assistance in overawing his nobles) in its endeavours to keep Reformed doctrines out of Scotland. The Acts of the Scots Parliament enable us to trace clearly the advance of Reformed opinion, and the measures used to combat it. The Lollardy which had infected the universities in the east, and the peasantry in the west, of Scotland appears to have died out; and the bishops were chiefly anxious to prevent any manner of persons (*strangeairs*) who happened "to arrive with thare schip within any part of this realme" from bringing with them "any bukis or workis of the said Luther, his discipulis or servandis.....under pane of escheting of thare schipis and guidis, and putting of thaire personis in presoun." This was in 1525. Two years later, it

was ordained that "all uther, the kingis lieges, assistaris to sic opunyeons be punisht in semeible wise." There is evidence for believing that even before 1525 Luther's books had entered the kingdom; that they were eagerly read; and that all along the east coast from Aberdeen to Edinburgh were men who had embraced and strove to propagate Lutheran ideas. Young Patrick Hamilton, of noble birth, was the first Lutheran martyr. He suffered death at the stake on the last day of February 1528, condemned by the Archbishops of St. Andrews and Glasgow, and the Bishops of Dunkeld, Brechin, and Dunblane. Other martyrs followed in quick succession—Henry Forrest, a Benedictine monk, in 1530; David Straiton and Norman Gourlay were burned at Greenside in Edinburgh in 1534; Thomas Forrest, Kyllor, Beveridge, Simson, and Forester were burned at Edinburgh, and Russell and Kennedy at Glasgow, in 1539. The king, by his presence at two of these burnings, lent his support to these persecutions. Henry VIII. of England twice attempted to induce James to break with Rome, and assert the royal supremacy over the Church in Scotland. The Scottish king was too dependent on the bishops to follow the advice of the English monarch. His refusal, the alienation of his barons, who hated the bishops because of their influence in the State, and the lukewarmness of his people, led to the rout of Solway, and to the death of the king at Falkland in 1542.

Mary, the only surviving legitimate child of James V.,

was five days old at the date of her father's death. The bishops and the barons struggled for the supremacy which the regency would give. The barons were successful. James, Earl of Arran, became regent, and the claims of Cardinal James Beaton for that office were rejected. The policy of the kingdom was changed. The regent and the nobles favoured the Protestant opinions, in order to combat the power of the chief ecclesiastics, and in 1543 an Act of Parliament was passed permitting the translation and circulation of the Scriptures in the common tongue.

The domineering policy of Henry VIII., who demanded the betrothal of the baby-queen to his son Edward, roused the old jealousy of Scotland. The regent and the nobles united with the bishops in resisting the English king, and this new political combination resulted in the revival of persecution. In January 1544 a large number of persons were tried for heresy before the regent and Cardinal David Beaton: four men and one woman were condemned to death, and the others were banished. The earlier martyrs had been, with one exception, learned men, who had by study or foreign travel met with and adopted Protestant opinions; the martyrs of 1544 belonged to the common people. The Reformed opinions had gone deeper and taken firmer root.

In 1546, George Wishart was seized, condemned, and burned for heresy at St. Andrews. His martyrdom marked the beginning of the popular movement

in Scotland in favour of Reformation. He had preached a pure gospel fearlessly in many parts of the country. His gentle fearlessness, his blameless life, his eloquence, and the gospel he preached, had all produced a deep impression on the people of Scotland. Before the burning of Wishart there are no traces of any widespread sympathy with the Reformed opinions; but after his martyrdom the general feeling in Scotland underwent a great, sudden, and almost inexplicable change. One of those silent revolutions which the most careless historian cannot help seeing, and which the most profound cannot hope adequately to account for, took place in Scotland. Wishart's burning dates the new birth of the Scottish Church and of the Scottish nation. The cardinal, who had successfully conquered the revolt of the barons, who had become the most popular man in Scotland from his energetic opposition to the English alliance, not only became himself an object almost of hatred, but his anti-English policy became from this moment disliked by a large proportion of the people. The cardinal was assassinated in 1546. His slayers held the castle of St. Andrews for more than a year, and only capitulated when a French fleet was brought against them.

The anti-English feeling was again in the ascendant when the English invaded Scotland. The regent was induced to resign in favour of the Queen-Dowager Mary of Lorraine, and in 1554 the time-honoured French alliance seemed as secure as ever. The queen-

dowager was a princess of ability and experience in government. She was supported by her brothers, the princes of the House of Guise, who at that time practically ruled France. The young Queen of Scots was married to the Dauphin of France in 1558. The French or Romanist party was triumphant; the Reformation movement seemed stifled or stamped out.

But the leaven of Wishart's death was working beneath the surface. John Knox, Wishart's friend and defender, had returned to Scotland in 1555, and the country began to feel his presence.

John Knox, the Reformer of Scotland, born in 1505 at Giffordsgate, a suburb of Haddington, had embraced the Reformed faith in 1542, and had attached himself to Wishart, accompanying him in his preaching tours throughout Scotland. When the martyr was apprehended Knox wished to share his captivity, but Wishart refused his request. "Nay, return to your bairnes," he said, "and God bless you; ane is sufficient for a sacrifice." Knox had found protection for some time in the families of Douglas of Longniddrie and Cockburn of Ormiston; and when stricter search was made for him, he, after many wanderings, took shelter in the castle of St. Andrews, then held by the slayers of Cardinal Beaton. In this stronghold he was first called on to exercise his marvellous gifts as a preacher. Sir David Lindsay of the Mount—who had been a favourite of both James IV. and of James V.; whose satires had exposed the vices of the clergy in Scotland;

who had been one of the Reforming counsellors of the regent, the Earl of Arran—had been obliged, like Knox, to take shelter in the castle of St. Andrews. He, along with Henry Balnaves of Halhill, a man scarcely less distinguished, and John Rough, justly esteemed since the death of Wishart as the leading Reformer in Scotland, insisted that Knox should undertake the duty of publicly preaching the word. His reluctance was overcome, and Knox found his true vocation. He became preacher to the garrison in the castle. The townspeople flocked to hear him. A congregation of the Reformed grew up in St. Andrews, and on one memorable day the Lord's Supper was dispensed amid the company of believers. Nineteen months in the French galleys, which followed the capitulation of the garrison, did not break his spirit nor deaden his faith. When released with his companions at the intercession of Edward VI. of England, he went to that country, where he received a hearty welcome, and was employed as a preacher in the service of the king. He was stationed at Berwick-on-Tweed, then transferred to Newcastle, and in the end of 1551 he was appointed one of the king's chaplains. He soon became an influential adviser to the leaders of the English Reformation. He was offered and refused a bishopric. It was at his suggestion that the Declaration on the subject of kneeling at Communion was inserted in the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI. Driven from the kingdom on the accession of Mary, he went to France,

and spent the year 1554 in visiting the leaders of the Reformed Churches of that country and of Switzerland. Enriched with all this hard-earned experience he returned to Scotland in 1555.

He found that the Reformation had made some advance during his absence from his native land. Many martyrs had sealed their testimony with their blood; others had suffered confiscation of goods and banishment from their native land. Cockburn of Ormiston and Crichton of Brunston were banished and their estates confiscated; Sir John Melville of Raith had been beheaded; Adam Wallace had been burned on the Castlehill at Edinburgh. Stringent laws had been passed against the dissemination of the Reformed opinions. In spite of all these terrors and restraints, men and women met in small secret assemblies to study the Scriptures and confirm each other's faith; while, to prevent suspicion, they attended mass publicly. When Knox returned, he began, with his usual indifference to danger, to preach in his lodgings in Edinburgh. John Erskine of Dun took him to Forfarshire. Sir James Sandilands prevailed on him to come to Calder House. While in Forfarshire he persuaded his friends to avoid their temporizing practices, and to separate themselves from the Romish communion. At Calder House he administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the Reformed rite. He gathered round him a band of sympathizers, some of whom were men of high standing

and influence. Archibald Lord Lorn, John Lord Erskine, James Stewart, afterwards Earl of Moray, were all inspired by his preaching. His success encouraged him to preach more openly than before. The Reformed party were emboldened by his courage; and the gentlemen of Forfarshire made open profession of the Reformed faith, and united in a common "band" or covenant to maintain and promote the preaching of the true gospel. The clergy became alarmed. Knox was summoned before the ecclesiastical authorities; but his supporters were so numerous that he was left unmolested. Recalled to Geneva in 1556 by his congregation there, he left Scotland, to be tried, condemned, and burned in effigy in his absence. Scotland, however, had need of Knox. He was sent for; and to prepare for his coming, a confederation of nobles and gentlemen was formed, who published a Covenant, in which they resolved to maintain the gospel and renounce the superstitions of Popery. The confederacy thus constituted was styled the Congregation, and organized the Reformed movement.

Meanwhile the queen's French troops and French officers roused the national pride of Scotland; while the burning of Walter Mylne exasperated the people against the Popish clergy. The Congregation became a power in the land, and felt strong enough to petition the queen for leave to assemble publicly or privately to read prayers in the common tongue and for expounding the Scriptures.

Easter was kept with unusual pomp and solemnity by the regent and court in 1559, and a decree was published prohibiting any from preaching or administering the sacraments without the authority of the bishops. The Reformed preachers disregarded the decree, and were summoned to appear before the Justiciary Court at Stirling. The Congregation armed themselves to protect their preachers, and the regent gathered troops to suppress armed revolt.

At this critical moment Knox landed at Leith, and went straight to Perth, where the Congregation had assembled. The queen-dowager marched towards Perth. Lord Glencairn brought two thousand five hundred troops to strengthen the Congregation. Argyle, Lord James Stewart, and other Lords of the Congregation, tried to mediate and prevent a civil war. The Court party promised to dismiss the French troops and grant toleration. But the regent did not keep faith; she actually garrisoned Perth with French troops. Then all felt that this state of matters must be ended. An English alliance was better than French domination. The Congregation entered into negotiations with Elizabeth's Government. English troops were sent to their aid. The French were beaten in the field and shut up in Leith. The regent died in June 1560, and the Lords of the Congregation were masters of Scotland.

Events marched with rapid stride. The Scottish Estates met in August. A petition was presented

craving Reformation in doctrine, in discipline, and in the administration of the sacraments, and asking that the patrimony of the Church be reserved for the support of "the true ministrie of the word of God, schools and godly learning, and the poor." Within *four* days the document known afterwards as the Scots Confession was presented, voted upon, and adopted. The Pope's jurisdiction within the realm was declared to be abolished, and the practice of the Roman Catholic religion was prohibited.

No collection of Scots Acts of Parliament contains these statutes of 1560. The Scottish sovereign, without whose signature they had not the force of law, was in France. When Mary was informed of what had been done, and her signature was asked, she refused to give it. Her husband, the young King of France, died at the close of the year, and Mary Queen of Scots returned to her native land in 1561.

She came determined to put the Reformation down. She played for heavy stakes, and she lost. She was undoubtedly the lawful Queen of England, for no one will pretend that Elizabeth was the legitimate daughter of Henry VIII.; and her Scottish policy, sketched by the Jesuit advisers of her uncles, the Guises, was to make Scotland a vantage-ground for a Romanist rising in England, which, along with her legal claims, might seat her on the English throne. "Full of ambition, she had many chances before her. If the Catholics prevailed in France, she might rely on help from that

country ; if there were any movement of Catholics in England, it must be in her name ; if anything were to befall Elizabeth, she was the next heir to the English throne. The future was full of possibilities. Meanwhile she must win the goodwill of the Scots,—perhaps she might even succeed in winning them back to Catholicism ; anyhow she must have Scotland under her control as a safe starting-point for her future plans.”

At first Mary’s rule was wise. With marvellous reticence and power of dissimulation she waited the course of events. She allowed the great leader of the Congregation, her half-brother James, Earl of Moray, to rule the land. She claimed and obtained toleration for her own Catholic worship ; she fomented the discontent in her kingdom against the inflexibility of Knox ; she charmed the people with her beauty and graceful manners. Almost insensibly she built up in Scotland a strong Queen’s party, and she lulled into fancied security almost all her opponents. Four years of self-restraint, then she struck her first blow. She married her cousin, Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley. He was a Catholic, and the marriage menaced the Scottish Reformation. He was a great-grandson of Henry VII., and the union was a threat to Elizabeth. The Catholic lords were recalled to Scotland, and Catholic conspiracies caused the ground to tremble under Elizabeth’s feet. One man alone in Scotland had not been blinded. Knox had refused to submit to

the queen's blandishments. From his pulpit he had published the danger to the Reformation in her secret plans. He had warned the people against the great Catholic conspiracy in which France and Spain had engaged; he had denounced the marriage; he had exposed every step taken towards undermining the Reformation and endangering the alliance with England. His friends thought him over-suspicious, too headstrong and violent. Erskine of Dun counselled patience. George Buchanan wrote to Cecil that he was doing his best "to mitigate somewhat his [Knox's] acerbity." All in vain. Knox stood firm, and could not be silenced. In the end the country saw that he had been right from the beginning—had foreseen what they did not perceive until after the event. After six years of intrigue there came civil war, imprisonment and deposition of the queen, and the coronation of the baby king James VI. The Parliament and the regent in 1567 confirmed the Acts of the Parliament of 1560, and the Reformation was established in Scotland *de jure* as well as *de facto*.

CHAPTER II.

THE RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF SCOTLAND BEFORE THE REFORMATION.

A dark age—Revivals in the medieval Church—Force spent before reaching Scotland—An evangelical bishop—The nobles licentious and superstitious—Enriching of the Church and corruption of the clergy—Dr. M'Crie's picture of the time—The Lollards—Sir David Lindsay—The people's ignorance of the gospel—A parish priest described.

WE know singularly little about the religious condition of Scotland in the stormy period which elapsed between the wars of the Bruce succession and the beginning of the sixteenth century. These wars and their consequences — weakness of kingly authority, and the independence, turbulence, and tyranny of the greater barons—had the most disastrous effects on the civilization and social prosperity of the country, and could not fail to be injurious to religion and pious living. Scotland never seems to have been visited by those revivals of religion which, from time to time, awakened the medieval Church to its Christian duties; the force of these great movements always seems to have spent

itself before they reached Scotland. The Scottish Church did not lack pious and energetic ecclesiastics—men who lived noble lives, and who died like Bishop Brown of Dunkeld, who, “throwing himself entirely on the mercy, rather than on the justice, of God, expressed a firm trust in his salvation, not for his own merits, but through the passion of Christ.” Yet there is abundant evidence to prove that such men were rare among the Scottish ecclesiastics.

The nobles of Scotland were turbulent, licentious, and superstitious; men who led brawling and immoral lives, and who made a death-bed repentance, which consisted frequently in buying pardon for the sins of their lives by bequeathing to the Church possessions which they could not carry away with them after death. These bequests were not interfered with in Scotland, as in most other countries, and the Scottish Church was comparatively wealthy.

It was almost unavoidable that in Scotland the higher clergy should become a political rather than a religious organization. Even before the wars of the Bruce succession, and when the kingly power was strong, the kings of Scotland were accustomed to regard the authority of the bishops as a means of curbing the pretensions of the barons; and in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when the central authority was almost impotent, the kings had no other bulwark against the barons. Scotland was too poor a country, too uncivilized, too remote from the centre of Eu-

ropean life, to attract greatly the attention of the popes, and her kings do not seem to have found it necessary to protect themselves from the encroachments of the temporal supremacy of the Church. All these various causes led the Scottish monarchs to favour the aggrandizement of Scottish churchmen, and to protect them in their secular possessions and privileges.

This special characteristic of the Scoto-Roman Church was hurtful to its spiritual life and religious character. Younger sons of the turbulent nobles, by embracing an ecclesiastical career, won political power and secular position almost at once. They entered the Church from worldly motives, and their presence in it could not fail to demoralize religion. It is not too much to say that the state of the Scottish Church in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries finds no parallel, save in the fearfully corrupt and degraded Frankish Church of the later Merwings and the earlier Carlings.

The example of the greater ecclesiastics could not fail to influence evilly the parish clergy; and the records of Scottish provincial councils show the moral degradation of churchmen of all classes, and the powerlessness of the authorities to restrain shameless living. A lurid light is cast on the character of the Scottish provincial clergy by the fact that parish priests, vowed to celibacy, and unable by Church and civil law to marry, were commonly succeeded in their benefices by their sons.

The late Dr. M'Crie draws a dark picture of the state of religion in Scotland, but not darker than the facts disclose. "The full half of the wealth of the nation belonged to the clergy, and the greater part of this was in the hands of a few individuals who had command of the whole body. Avarice, ambition, and the love of secular pomp, reigned among the superior orders. Bishops and abbots rivalled the first nobility in magnificence, and preceded them in honours. They were Privy-Councillors, and Lords of Session as well as of Parliament, and had long engrossed the principal offices of State. A vacant bishopric or abbacy called forth powerful competitors, who contended for it as for a principality or petty kingdom. It was obtained by similar arts, and not unfrequently taken possession of by the same weapons. Inferior benefices were openly put to sale, or bestowed on the illiterate and unworthy minions of courtiers, on dice-players, strolling bards, and the bastards of bishops. The lives of the clergy, exempt from secular jurisdiction, and corrupted by wealth and idleness, were become a scandal to religion and an outrage on decency. While they professed chastity, and prohibited, under the severest penalties, any of the ecclesiastical order from contracting lawful wedlock, the bishops set an example of the most shameless profligacy before the inferior clergy,—avowedly kept their harlots; provided their natural sons with benefices; and gave their daughters in marriage to the sons of

the nobility and principal gentry, many of whom were so mean as to contaminate the blood of their families by such base alliances, for the sake of the rich doweries they brought."

The medieval revivals which did so much to purify from time to time the Church in England, France, Germany, and Italy, do not seem, as has been said, to have reached Scotland; and Lollardy, introduced from England, was the only pre-Reformation protest against the spiritual deadness and unholy lives of the Scottish churchmen. The history of Lollardy in Scotland is yet to be investigated. It appears, however, that Lollard teachers found their way into the University of St. Andrews soon after its foundation, for we find more than one decree ordering search to be made for such men. James Besly, a disciple of Wyclif, made a preaching tour through part of Scotland, and attracted great attention by his vigorous denunciations of the wealth and immorality of the clergy. A council of the Scottish ecclesiastics met, under the presidency of a certain Lawrence of Lindores, in 1406 or in 1407, examined Besly, and pronounced him a heretic. He was burned at Perth. His writings, with other Lollard tracts, were carefully preserved, and circulated among the common people, especially in the west of Scotland. They tended to keep alive the desire for a purer faith and a holier life; and their complaints against the clergy were reproduced at the era of the Reformation in the pungent satires

of Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, Lord Lyon King-at-Arms to James IV. and to James V.

In Lindsay's *Dreme*, the poet has a vision of hell, and says :—

“ Thare saw we mony cairfull Cardinall
And Archebischopis, in thair pontificall ;
Proud and perverst Prelates, out of nummer,
Priouris, Abbottis, and fals flatterand Freris.”

He asked why all these clergymen had come to the place of woe, and was told :—

“ The cause of thair unhappy chance
Was covatyce, luste, and ambitioun :.....
Als they did nocht instruct the ignorant
Provocand them to penitence, be preicheing ;
But servit wardlie Prencis insolent
And war promovit be thair fenyeit fleicheing,
Nocht for thair science, wysedome, nor teicheing :
Be symonie, was thair promotioun
More for deneiris, nor for devotioun.
Ane uther cause of the punytioun
Of thir unhappy prelattis, imprudent,
They made nocht equale distributioun
Of haly Kirk the patrimonie and rent :
But temporallie they have it all mispent,
Quhilkis suld have bene trypartit in to thrie :
First, to uphauld the Kirk in honestie ;
The secund part, to sustene thair estaitis ;
The thrid part to be given to the puris.”

The people, under such religious guides, could not fail to know nothing of the gospel of Christ. The bishops did not preach, and the parish clergy gave no public exhortation. What sermons were delivered were spoken by the Dominican and Franciscan friars, who, in that corrupt period, had sadly declined from

their early zeal and piety. Their texts were commonly taken, not from Scripture, but from that curious book of tales, the *Gesta Romanorum*, and were usually more provocative of mirth than of conversion. The parish clergy confined their religious duties to the hearing of confession and the repeating the service in Latin, which was an unknown language to most of their audience.

Lindsay paints the parish priest and his penitent in *Kitte's Confession*:—

“ He me absolvit for ane plak
 Thocht he na pryce with me wald mak,
 And mekil Latyne he did mummill,
 I hard na thing bot hummill bummill.
 He schew me nocht of Goddis Word,
 Quhilk scharper is than ony sword,
 And deip intill our hart dois prent,
 Our syn quharethrow we do repent;
 He pat me na thing into feir,
 Quharethrow I suld my syn forbeir;
 He schew me nocht the maledictioun
 Of God for syn, nor the afflictioun.....
 Of Christis blude na thing he knew
 Nor of His promisses full trew,
 That saifis all that wyll beleve,
 That Sathan sall us never greve.....
 Of this na thing he cud me tell,
 Bot gave me pennance, ilk ane day
 Ane *Ave Marie* for to say:
 And Fridayis fyve na fische to eit,
 Bot butter and eggis ar better meit;
 And with ane plak to buy ane Messe,
 Fra drounkin Schir Jhone Latynelesse.”

The Church had become a mere worldly estate: its ministers, men who lived a hardened, coarse, and licentious life; the people, men who despised the avarice and the vices of the clergy, and yet were superstitious in the last degree.

CHAPTER III.

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE REFORMERS.

The reticence of the Scottish Reformers—Contrast to Luther—Knox's letters and confessions—Recognition of the great fact of sin and the gospel message of pardon—The theology of St. Augustine—Reformation not a political or social movement—Gospel sermons—First petition to the Congregation—How the movement grew—James Melville hearing Knox—Demand for preaching.

IT is easy to speak against the leaders of the Scottish Reformation—to describe their intolerance, their interference in secular affairs, and the rudeness of their language and manners. The men belonged to the times they lived in, and had rough work to do. Nor were they, for the most part, men who cared to talk much about their own spiritual life, nor of what first moved them to embrace a purer and more spiritual religion.

The singular reticence about their personal conversion is a marked feature in the lives of the Scottish Reformers. They had none of the genial, homely outspokenness of Luther. We know all about the great German Reformer. He gossips over his penitence, deep spiritual anguish of soul, his conversion—

its time, place, and manner. The Scottish Reformers take after their great leader, John Calvin. The grave Frenchman tells us almost nothing about his own personal spiritual experience. Once only, in that marvellous Preface to his Commentary on the Psalms, does Calvin unbend. There he says that he came to Christ by a sudden conversion. How Knox, or Rough, or Wishart, or gentle Walter Mylne found their Saviour has never been disclosed; and yet there is not wanting evidence to tell how deep the tide of personal piety ran.

The deep spirituality of the great Scottish Reformer finds constant expression in his letters to his mother-in-law, Mrs. Bowes. "Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," he writes on one occasion, "I am not left so bare without comfort, but my hope is to obtain such mercy that, if a short end be not made of all my miseries by final death (which to me were no small advantage), that yet, by Him who never despised the sobs of the sore afflicted, I shall be so encouraged to fight that England and Scotland shall both know that I am ready to suffer more than either poverty or exile for the profession of that doctrine and that heavenly religion whereof it has pleased His merciful providence to make me, among others, a simple soldier and witness-bearer unto men."

No man was so ready to examine himself, none so quick to mark his own failings and besetting temptations. He accused himself of carelessness for the

souls of his countrymen; he ought, he thought, to have gone more from place to place. He bewailed his rudeness of speech, his deficiency in impartiality and fidelity. "Besides these," he says, "I was assaulted, yea infected, with more gross sins—that is, my wicked nature desired the favours, the estimation, and the praise of men: against which, albeit that sometimes the Spirit of God moves me to fight, and earnestly did stir me (God knoweth I lie not) to sob and lament for these imperfections, yet never ceased they to trouble me when any occasion was offered; and so privily and craftily did they enter into my breast that I could not perceive myself to be wounded till vainglory had almost got the upper hand. O Lord, be merciful to my great offence, and deal not with me according to my great iniquity, but according to the multitude of thy mercies!" He who had gone through so much for the cause of his Master had a very tender sympathy for all who suffered for Christ's sake. "But if God shall strengthen you (as unfeignedly I pray that His Majesty may), then is there but a dark cloud overspread the sun for a moment, which shortly shall vanish, so that the beams after shall be sevenfold more bright and amiable nor they were before. Your patience and constancy shall be a louder trumpet to your posterity than were the voices of the prophets that instructed you, and so is not the trumpet ceased so long as any boldly resisteth idolatry. And therefore, for the tender mercies of

God, arm yourselves to stand with Christ in this his short battle."

— These leaders of the Scottish Reformation, one and all, were men who recognized the great fact of sin and the gospel message of pardon through the atoning life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. They were fed on the theology of Augustine, which is the theology of St. Paul. It was Augustine who brought Thomas Forrest to Christ. "Oh, happy and blessed was that book to me," he said, "by which I came to the knowledge of the truth." Augustine sent him to the Scriptures, and there he learned what sin was and what the gospel was. "There is no pardon for our sins," he told his hearers, "that can come to us either from pope or any other, but only by the blood of Christ." Sense of sin, temptation, struggle, persecution, sent them to Christ, and made them prove the power of prayer. "Trouble and fear are the very spurs to prayer," wrote Knox; "for when man, compassed about with vehement calamities, and vexed with continual solicitude, having by help of man no hope of deliverance, with sore oppressed and punished heart, fearing also greater punishment to follow, from the deep pit of tribulation doth call to God for comfort and support, such prayer ascendeth into God's presence, and returneth not in vain."

The Reformation was for them no political movement or social upheaval. It was a revival of religion in their own hearts, accompanied by the necessity of

proclaiming to others the gospel that had gladdened them. They preached. Necessity was laid on them. They could say with Paul, "Woe is unto us if we preach not the gospel."

It was their preaching, their message of the gospel which came warm from the hearts of men who themselves had felt its power, that changed Scotland. "Thou preachest quietly and privately in houses, and openly in the fields," said the public prosecutor to Walter Mylne. "Yea, man, and on the sea, also, sailing in the ships," was the answer. "It is too much to preach every Sunday," said the Bishop of Dunkeld to Thomas Forrest; "for in so doing you may make the people think that we should preach likewise." It was this evangelical preaching, these gospel sermons, that created that revival in Scotland which we call the Reformation.

Throughout the history of the Reformation movement, liberty to preach was constantly demanded and asserted. The earliest demands made by the supporters of the Reformation were for the liberty of reading the Holy Scriptures; leave to assemble publicly and privately at common prayers in the vulgar tongue; leave to meet for the dispensation of the sacrament of baptism and of the Lord's Supper in the common tongue; leave to expound the Scriptures in assemblies.

The first petition of the Congregation stated that as the reading of Scripture had been permitted by

authority of the Estates, so the government should sanction that "the common prayers be read weekly on Sundays and other festival days, in the parish churches, with the lessons of the New and Old Testament, conform to the Book of Common Prayers;" and that "if the curate cannot or will not read them, the most qualified person in the parish should be allowed to act in his stead." It also asked that "the doctrine, preaching, and interpretation of the Scriptures should be used privately in houses." The nobles and gentlemen who favoured the Reformation took Reformed preachers to be their private chaplains, and devout and poorer neighbours were welcomed to what was called "family," but to what was really "public," worship. One of the articles in all the earlier covenants was an obligation to maintain the preaching of the pure gospel as God shall give opportunity.

It is interesting to notice how the movement began and how it grew. After heroic and wandering preachers had sown the good seed throughout the land, little companies of disciples met in private for mutual study of the Scriptures and pious exhortation. These congregations had no pastors: they met in private houses, and provided for religious instruction and for mutual edification as they best could. They refrained from the dispensation of the sacraments, and contented themselves with the services of pious and intelligent men, whom they selected from their own number, to read the Scriptures, to exhort, and to offer

up prayers in their assemblies. When a preacher came round on a preaching journey, these exhorters might be seen, pencil or pen in hand, taking notes of the sermon, to be used afterwards in the more private meetings of the little Protestant communities. It may be well imagined, however, that the hearers were sometimes too interested to take notes. James Melville tells us that on one occasion, while listening to Knox, he had his pen and his little book in his hand, and took away such things as he could comprehend. "But when he entered on the application," he adds, "he made me so to grow and tremble that I could not hold a pen to write."

As the Reformation spread, the Protestants got bolder, their services became more public and more formal. "They cleansed the parish churches of images and all other monuments of idolatry, and commanded that mass should not be said in them, and in place thereof the Book set forth by the godly King Edward is read in the same churches." Thus the Reformation flourished by the preaching of the Word, and the pulpits, occupied by faithful and earnest preachers, became a power in the land.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHURCH OF THE REFORMATION AND ITS RELIGIOUS LIFE.

History of its organization unique—Protestantism in France—Anxiety to promote life among the people—Scarcity of ministers—Exhorters and readers—Short services—Catechetical exercises—Book of Common Prayer—Singing—Note-taking encouraged—Care for the children—Example of the instruction in use—A favourite scholar—Music—An early communicant—A first “hansell” to Heaven.

AFTER 1560 the Reformation emerged into distinct and visible shape, and the growth of the Church reformed is easily traced. The history of the organization of the Reformation Church in Scotland is unique. In Germany and in Switzerland the Reformers first won over the civil authorities to their side, and the organization of the infant Churches was largely moulded by the State. Calvin's Ecclesiastical Ordinances were issued in the name of the Town Council of Geneva. In France, the kirk-session or consistory was the earliest Church court. The Protestants in Paris, who met together in a private house, formed themselves into a church by electing some of their number to be a session of elders, and by calling

a young and eloquent preacher to be their pastor. The example of the Protestants in the capital was speedily followed all over the land. Hundreds of separate Presbyterian congregations existed before any means were provided for more extended organization. Then those congregations sent representatives to a National Synod, and gradually a Presbyterian Church was organized on a wide basis.

In Scotland, the first Church court appears to have been the General Assembly; then came Kirk-sessions, then provincial Synods, and lastly Presbyteries.

For a long time the two Church courts in Scotland were the Assembly and the Kirk-session. The one vindicated the independence and liberty of the Church, the other was the court mainly instrumental in regulating the religious life by a firm and salutary discipline. It was not till 1581 that the Presbyterian polity was thoroughly established by the institution of the Presbytery.

The Reformers in Scotland, as in other Reformed Churches, sought to create and maintain religious life among the people by preaching the Word, reading the Scriptures, and catechising their parishioners. The preaching of the Word, regularly, earnestly, and by duly qualified men, was their first care. It was difficult, however, in the beginnings of the Reformed Church to find suitable men to intrust with this solemn public duty, and our Reformers were careful not to appoint men who had not the requisite gift.

It was impossible to find pastors for the thousand parishes of Scotland. In 1567 the Reformed Church had only two hundred and fifty-seven ministers, and in 1574 the number had grown only to two hundred and eighty-nine. At the earlier date they supplied the lack of ministers by men who were either exhorters or readers. The readers, most of them priests who had conformed, read in public the Scripture lessons in the order set forth in what is called Knox's Liturgy, and the prayers given in that Book of Common Order; while the exhorters were permitted to catechise the grown-up people and the children. The Church, however, seems to have been dissatisfied with the work of these exhorters, and in 1574 we find that they had all disappeared, and the parishes were supplied by two hundred and eighty-nine ministers and seven hundred and fifteen readers. In parishes where there was a minister who could give his whole time to the one parish, it was ordained "that there shall be four sermons in the week—two on Sundays and two on week-days: one before noon and another after on the Sabbath; and on the week-days, one on Wednesday and another on Friday." It was also made matter of regulation that the Sunday services "shall pass not the space of an hour and a half," and that the week-day services "shall pass not the space of an hour." Besides these services common prayers were read daily, and an exhortation given, "but in such shortness that the whole time occupied exceed

not the space of half an hour." The afternoon service on the Sundays was usually spent in catechising. "Every minister was earnestly exhorted to his private exercise of fervent prayer, reading, and meditation of things heard and read, that thereby he may be stirred up to grow day by day more and more zealous and devout in spirit, familiar with his God, armed with spiritual armour against all adversaries, and diligently moved to practice of doctrine in a godly life and holy conversation."

Few parishes, however, had the full services of a minister, and it was by no means uncommon for one pastor to have charge of so many congregations that he was able to give but one sermon to each in the week. The readers conducted the other services enjoined, and the people met to hear prayers and Scripture read.

Our Reformers held fast by the principle that the reading of the Word is itself a means of grace, and in their order of public worship, prayers in the common tongue, not in Latin, and the reading of Scripture without note or comment, held an important place. In the earlier years of the Reformation the English Prayer-book (the Second Prayer-Book of King Edward VI.) was commonly used, and continued in use till 1564, when it was gradually superseded by the Prayer-book which bears the name of the Book of Geneva, Knox's Liturgy or the Book of Common Order—a book which seems to have been based on the Second Prayer-Book of King Edward VI.

The service began with prayer, but it seems to have been the custom, as it is at many of our evangelistic meetings, to sing the people in ; and gradually the psalm or hymn sung while the people were assembling became the first part of the congregational worship.

The young people were encouraged to bring pen and note-book with them to the church, and the notes of the sermon thus taken were afterwards used in the family catechising.

The Reformation Church paid great attention to the godly upbringing of children ; and while it insisted on parental duty, recognized its own churchly obligations in this respect. As has already been said, the afternoon service on every Sunday was what we should now call a children's service. It was a catechising, and the old people as well as the young attended and took part. The Catechisms used differed in different parishes and under different pastors, but the three most popular were Calvin's Catechism, Craig's Catechism, and the Heidelberg or Palatine Catechism. I am inclined to believe that the last gradually superseded the two former, and was in almost universal use throughout Scotland till displaced by the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly. An edition of this Palatine Catechism was issued by authority of the General Assembly, "with the arguments and use of the several doctrines therein contained." It may be interesting to quote one question, answer,

and “use,” in order to show the instruction given to our Scottish young of the Reformation Church.

“QUES. 26. *What believest thou when thou sayest,* I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH ?

“ANS. I believe in the everlasting Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who created of nothing the heaven and the earth, and all things that are therein, and doth uphold and govern the same by His everlasting counsel and providence, to be by the means of Christ *my* God and *my* Father: therefore I so trust in Him, and so repose myself upon Him, that I doubt not but He will provide all things necessary both for my soul and for my body ; and moreover, also, that whatsoever evil He sendeth upon me in this miserable life, He will turn the same to my salvation ; seeing He is both able to do it, as being God Almighty, and willing to do it, as being my bountiful Father.

“ THE USE.

“This article of our faith, and the doctrine therein contained, maketh much for the comfort of the godly ; for seeing we are joined in league with that God Who is our Father, Who is almighty, Who created heaven and earth, Who governeth us and preserveth us, what is there that we may not look for from such a Father ? what is there whereby we may not make ourselves sure ? For example, the leper was persuaded only of the power of Christ, he knew not His

will; therefore he said, 'Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean' (Matt. viii. 2), and he was cleansed. How much more shall *we* obtain those things which we ask, if both we be persuaded of His almighty power, and also doubt not of His promises? From hence is our love to our neighbour set on fire; for when God hath promised that He will increase His blessings upon them who are liberal to the poor, and He is God Almighty, who would not be pricked forward to bestow alms liberally and cheerfully. By the same doctrine I am admonished not to doubt of any man's salvation, though he seem cast away of God, and withal to keep myself in the fear of God, because God is able to raise up again my neighbour that is fallen, and to call him home to the way of salvation, and also to suffer me to fall into grievous sins, and to cast me off unless I abide in faith."

James Melville, in his *Diary*, a beautiful unconscious record of a pious and gentle life, tells us that his minister, Mr. Thomas Anderson, made him, a small boy of twelve, frequently repeat the Catechism (Calvin's) on the Sabbath afternoons, "because he heard that the people liked well the clearness of my voice and my pronouncing with some feeling; and thereby God moved a godly, honest matron in the town to make much of me therefore, and to call me her little sweet angel." The sentence reveals a pleasant picture,—the worthy pastor, "a man of mean gifts, but of a singularly good life," putting questions in the con-

gregation assembled for afternoon public worship; the boys and girls ready to answer the questions; one little favourite scholar; the people taking singular interest in the service, and learning the truths of God from the answers given by their children in the church.

James Melville tells us, too, how our Reformers were at pains to instruct the children in music, in order to improve the praises of the sanctuary. The Laird of Dun "of his charity entertained a blind man who had a singularly good voice." This blind singer taught the teacher and the school children "the whole Psalms in metre and the tunes thereof," and to sing them in church, "by hearing of whom I was so delighted that I learned many of the Psalms and tunes in metre, which I have thought ever since a great blessing and comfort." Melville also learned to repeat and to sing Wedderburn's songs "with great diversity of tunes." When the boy was in church he yearned to become a minister, "but thought it a thing impossible that he could ever have the ability to stand up there and speak when all held their tongues and *looked*." He tells us too—"Finally I received the communion of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, first at Montrose, when I was in my thirteenth year, with greater reverence and sense in my soul than often thereafter I could find. When coming from the Table, a good honest man, an elder of the kirk, gave me an admonition concerning light-

ness, wantonness, and not taking tent to the preaching, and Word read, and prayers, which remained with me ever since."

Reverence, searching self-examination, and earnestness after higher things marked the spiritual life of the Reformation times. Witness James Melville and his sister, boy and girl. "I loved her exceedingly dearly, and she me more than the rest. She showed me one day, among others, a ballad set out in print against ministers that, for want of stipend, left their charges, beginning—

‘Who so do put hand to the plough,
And therefrom backward goes,
The Scriptures make it plain enough,
My kingdom’s not for those.’

With this she burst into tears, and said, ‘Alas! what will come of them at that latter day? God keep my father, and Mr. James Melville, and Mr. James Balfour from this.’”

Our Reformers were strong men, fearless, honest, outspoken. “The reformation of religion in Scotland was done as the men in the Gospel, who, bringing a man sick of the palsy, carried by foursome in a bed, broke the house above where Christ was, without asking leave of the goodman and master thereof, for the great desire which they had to come to Christ for the man’s health. Yet Christ found no fault therewith, but seeing their faith, approved the same and healed the man. So through zeal the kingdom of

heaven suffered violence at the beginning, and men sought to come to Christ without asking leave of king or Cæsar." But these fearless preachers were men of singularly tender heart and trustful faith, who knew the love of God and wondered at it. James Melville's little son Andrew, "beautiful, loving, and merry," whom his father set at the end of the table at dinner and supper, that he might feast his eyes with the sight of the child, "pined away, keeping the sweetest and pleasantest eye that could be in any one's head." "When he died," says Melville, "I marvelled at my own heart that was so wrung and moved with it, so that even yet, when I write this, I feel the yearning of natural affection. And if we, that are earthly worms, can be so affected to our children, what a love bears that heavenly Father to us! He was my first propine and hansell to Heaven."

IN COVENANTING TIMES.

By REV. CHARLES G. M'CRIE,

Author of "Studies and Sketches."

CHAPTER I.

THE COVENANTING DOCUMENTS.

Form taken by the reforming movement—The gentlemen of the Mearns—The Common Band—The King's Confession—Solemn League—Testimonies and Declarations—Torwood Excommunication—Deeply religious spirit—Impassioned devotion to the person of Christ.

THERE are some quarters in which the term “religious revival” does not meet with much favour. Revival movements are apt to be regarded by scholars and historians with coldness, if not positive aversion, being associated in their minds with what is sensational and emotional, noisy and vulgar, illiterate and unstable. The historian John Hill Burton was not a man likely to be attracted by a religious revival movement, or to be lightly induced to turn aside from State affairs in order to give a narrative of such in his “History of Scotland.” And yet, when he reaches the years 1581–83, that erudite Historiographer-Royal for Scotland chronicles the appearance of the Second Book of Discipline and the National Covenant as the fruit of “a great religious revival,” and devotes a portion of his standard work to tracing

the progress of what he calls "the great revival." * In so doing, his historical insight and impartiality did not fail him. The Covenanting movement in Scotland was, in all that gave it vitality and impulse, a religious movement—a movement of genuine spiritual revival, the forces of which have not yet spent themselves, but are still telling upon the religious life of Scotland.

It is in this aspect of it alone that we propose to deal with the period assigned us, leaving the historical, political, and social sides of Covenanting times to be ascertained from the abundant literature that has gathered round them.

It seems only right to begin by directing attention to those documents which have stamped the times with the name they bear, and have given to those who drew them up, and those who were ready to die for them, the honoured name of Scottish Covenanters.

From its earliest period the Reformation movement in Scotland assumed a Covenanting form. As far back as 1556 the gentlemen of the Mearns, having had "the table of the Lord Jesus" ministered to them by John Knox, "banded themselves to the uttermost of their power to maintain the true preaching of the evangel of Christ, as God should offer unto them preachers and opportunity." †

Their example was followed in 1557 by the Re-

* "The History of Scotland." By John Hill Burton. Vol. v., chap. lviii., p. 201.

† "The Works of John Knox," vol. i., p. 251.

forming noblemen of Scotland. Convened at Edinburgh, they drew up "a Common Band," which was subscribed by the Earls of Argyle, Glencairn, Morton, and others, in which they bound themselves "to strive in their Master's cause, even as to death, being certain of the victory in Him," and also "to maintain, set forward, and establish the Word of God and His Congregation."* Two years later a similar "band" was entered into by representatives from various shires, convened at Perth in the name of Jesus Christ, and which "the hail congregationis" ordained and appointed several noblemen to sign in their name.†

These local "bands," signed by influential leaders of the Reforming party, paved the way for the National Covenant of 1580. The correct title of this important document is, "The Confession of Faith of the Kirk of Scotland; or, The National Covenant." It is sometimes called "The Second Confession," thus distinguishing it from that of 1560; sometimes "The Negative Confession," as it concerns itself largely with a repudiation of false doctrine; and sometimes "The King's Confession," as James VI. was the first to append his signature. Rightly to appreciate the spirit and form of this national testimony to Christ, the peril of the times which gave rise to it must to some extent be realized. In France the League had been formed. In Spain the mailed and cruel hand of Philip was uplifted to strike at religious and civil

* "The Works of John Knox," vol. i., p. 273.

† *Ibid.*, p. 344.

liberty. In Scotland Queen Mary was alive, and active in communicating with her co-religionists on the Continent. Popery had its Scottish supporters in the north, as also in the western districts of the country. In such circumstances the Protestants of Scotland deemed they had good cause to dread the restoration of the Church which had no mercy for, as it kept no faith with, heretics, and so drew up this "short and general Confession of the true Christian Faith and Religion, according to God's Word, and Acts of our Parliament." *

Leaving it to the historian to tell the story of the National Covenant—how it was sworn and subscribed by James VI., and thereafter by all ranks of persons through the kingdom; how in 1638, one of the years of the troubled reign of Charles I., it was enlarged and renewed, and those who had called themselves "Supplicants" were for the first time called "Covenanters;" how it was twice signed by Charles II.; and how, when that perjured monarch thought himself securely seated on the throne of his beheaded father, the Covenant was torn in pieces at the Cross of Edinburgh and burned in Linlithgow, thereafter, in 1662, to be legislatively abjured and condemned by Act of Parliament—we pass on to the next Covenanting document, the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643.

By that time Charles I. had quarrelled with his

* "Booke of the Universall Kirk of Scotland," part ii., p. 515.

English Parliament, and civil war had broken out. The Parliamentary party was not slow to perceive the benefit to be derived from cultivating the goodwill of the Covenanters of Scotland. In the General Assembly, and in the presence of English commissioners, Alexander Henderson produced a draft of the proposed bond. The revised document was assented to by the Convention of Estates that very afternoon. In the following month the English Parliament and the Assembly of Divines (then engaged in drawing up our present Confession of Faith) met in Westminster, and as the League was read, article by article, the whole Assembly stood and swore to it with uplifted hands. Thus was formed and adopted "The Solemn League and Covenant," which bears in its title to be "for reformation and defence of religion, the honour and happiness of the king, and the peace and safety of the three kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland." This religious and civil bond was renewed in 1648 by all ranks of people in Scotland, accompanied with "a solemn acknowledgment of public sins and breaches of the Covenant;" and it received the same treatment of feigned acceptance, followed by hearty rejection, on the part of Charles II., as did the National Covenant.

The latter half of the seventeenth century brings us into what are generally regarded as the Covenanting times. Then were fought the engagements at Rullion Green, Drumclog, and Bothwell Bridge; then were witnessed the sufferings of Scotland's glorious

army of Covenanted martyrs, with the conspicuous figures of Argyle, James Guthrie, Hugh Mackail, Richard Cameron, Donald Cargill, James Renwick, Margaret Wilson, and John Brown; then were held the field-meetings and the armed conventicles, when gospel-preaching could only be enjoyed by those who were willing to go in search of it "through mosses and moors and inaccessible mountains, through excess of heat and extremity of cold;" * then, with the furnace of persecution heated sevenfold, were "the killing times" of Scotland.

This period of our Church's history was fruitful in covenants that took the form of Testimonies and Declarations. Immediately before the skirmish at Drumclog in 1679 there were emitted the Declaration at Rutherglen in May of that year, and that of Glasgow in the following month. Subsequent to the battle of Bothwell Bridge there were the Sanquhar Declarations of 1680 and 1685, the Torwood Excommunication of 1680, and the Declaration at Lanark in 1682. The series closes with the Society people's Declaration of 1684, posted up at market crosses and church doors in Nithsdale, Galloway, Ayrshire, and Lanarkshire, and concluding with the prayer, "Let King Jesus reign, and all his enemies be scattered." †

Such then are the leading documents of the Scot-

* Shield's "Hind Let Loose. Testimony of the Sixth Period," p. 82.

† Wodrow's History, book iii., chap. viii., p. 148. (Burns's edition.)

tish Church in Covenanting times. They have often been denounced as manifestoes of persecution and treason, sneered at as displays of sectarian narrowness and intolerance, held up to ridicule as replete with presumptuous and pietistic phraseology. They have not wanted vindications at the hands of historians profoundly versant in the history of the period, and of national bards gifted with insight to perceive the secret of Scotland's greatness. We are not called upon to enter the lists, and we pass on with the remark that even in the case of the Cameronian declarations of the ultra-Covenanters, in which the House of Stewart is denounced and the right of subjects to have recourse to arms against tyrants is argued, there is more to be disposed of than strong language; and no one has a right to pronounce judgment upon the questions raised in these documents who knows them only through the pages of fiction and the ballads of Jacobite poets, but has failed, either through ignorance or incapacity, to master the close reasoning of such a work as that of Shield's, in which he argues "Concerning owning of Tyrant's Authority."* What we desire to give prominence to, with reference to the entire series of documents from 1556 to 1684, is the deeply religious spirit which pervades them all. They have in them the secular, the political, the purely ecclesiastical. The times in which, and the purposes for which, they were drawn up, demanded this. There

* "The Hind Let Loose."

is consequently in them that which is only temporary in interest and application, as also that which may not be fully abreast of nineteenth century ideas.

But before all and above all other things Scotland's Covenanting standards display impassioned devotion to the person of Christ, burning affection for "the true Christian faith and religion, pleasing God, and bringing salvation to man, which now is, by the mercy of God, revealed to the world by the preaching of the blessed evangel."* It is this passion for Christ and his gospel that made the Covenanters the men they were—that made the Covenanting struggle the blessing and the glory it has been to Scotland. Robert Burns was both seer and singer in the day he penned the lines :—

"The Solemn League and Covenant
Now brings a smile, now brings a tear.
But sacred freedom, too, was theirs :
If thou'rt a slave, indulge thy sneer."

* The National Covenant, opening paragraph.

CHAPTER II.

COVENANTING LIFE.

Glasgow Assembly—A scene—The Earl of Argyle—His great offence—Conduct in prison—His confidence in death—Andrew Hislop, the boy-martyr—Margaret MacLauchlan—The Wigtown Martyrs—The water of Blednoch—The Cameronians—"Faithful Contendings Displayed"—A Book of Dying Testimonies—Janet M'Ginnies—James Masson.

IT may be well now to turn from Covenanting literature to Covenanted lives—from the religion inscribed on parchment to the same religion lived out in the sacrifices and sufferings of the men and women of Covenanting times.

Let us start with a Covenanter representing one of the oldest and most powerful families in Scotland. The General Assembly which convened in the Cathedral Church of Glasgow in 1638, viewed as a momentous historical event, vies in interest with the Long Parliament, which it preceded in time, and possibly prepared the way for. Before the last of the twenty-six sessions of that Assembly had been held, a young nobleman intimated his adherence to the reformed religion. Not up till then a Covenanter, he had

striven to maintain an attitude of impartiality, but now felt compelled by the force of conviction to take a decided stand. "I have not," were his words to Alexander Henderson and his brethren, "striven to blow the bellows, but studied to keep matters in as soft a temper as I could; and now I desire to make it known that I take you all for members of a lawful Assembly and honest countrymen." The youthful speaker was Archibald Campbell, then Earl, subsequently Marquis, of Argyle. Possessing mansions in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Stirling, with properties in the counties of Renfrew and Ayr, and along by the Ochils, MacCallum More was the uncrowned king of the Highlands. With domains that extended from Glenmore in the far north to the Mull of Cantyre in the south, through the mountains of Lochaber and the forests of Badenoch, this chieftain reigned over tens of thousands of devoted clansmen, and could with ease bring five thousand claymores to the aid of any cause he espoused. As is certain to be the case with one standing so high and wielding so great an influence, unfavourable things have been said of the Covenanting nobleman. Even friendly critics are inclined to regard the wisdom with which he was universally credited as sometimes taking the form of craft. The impenetrableness that lay behind the finely-knit, capacious brow was allied with a certain shiftiness that found expression in the squint vision of him whom his contemporaries called "the gleed Marquis."

Giving due weight to what both friends and enemies have said regarding him, we contend that nothing will explain the character and conduct of the Covenanter leader except the theory that he was first a sincere Christian and then a true patriot. Never did the Christianity and the patriotism of this Scottish peer shine out more clearly than at his trial and execution. The principal counts in his indictment were, entering into the Solemn League and Covenant, and submitting to Oliver Cromwell. But if the author of "The Hind Let Loose" be correctly informed, that which incensed Charles II. against his old friend, and rendered his downfall certain, was the fact that Argyle had, when no one else was brave enough to do it, reproved his sovereign as John the Baptist reproved adulterous Herod.*

When sentence was pronounced, the doomed man received it with serenity, saying, "I had the honour to place the crown on the king's head; and now he hastens me to a better crown than his own." On returning to the common prison he told his wife not to concern herself about his judges; "they may shut me in where they please, but they cannot shut out God from me." On the morning of Monday, the day of execution, came good George Hutchison, an Edinburgh minister, to whose inquiry, "What cheer, my Lord?" he replied, "Good cheer, sir; the Lord hath said to me from heaven, 'Son, be of good cheer; thy

* Shield's "The Hind Let Loose," part ii., p. 128.

sins are forgiven thee.’” He then became so overpowered with a sense of the love of God that he retired to the window to hide from others his emotion; but he soon returned to the fire-place, and taking Hutchison by the hand, he said, “I thought to have concealed the Lord’s goodness, but it will not do; his kindness overpowers me. But God is good to me that he lets not out too much of it here, for he knows I could not bear it.” Although constitutionally of a timorous, sensitive disposition, his bearing on the scaffold was one of perfect composure. When they came in sight of the Maiden, the Edinburgh minister counselled him to hold fast his confidence in Christ, using the expressive words, “Grip sicker.” “Mr. Hutchison,” was the reply, “you know what I said: I am not afraid to be surprised with fear.” The moment before the head was laid on the block his medical man touched his pulse: the beat was normal and strong.

Thus fell the proto-martyr of Covenanting times in Scotland. He was mighty in life, but mightier far in death. “I could die like a Roman,” was one of his last utterances, “but choose rather to die like a Christian.” As a patriot he had lived and laboured; as a Scottish Covenanter, for him to live was Christ, and to die was gain.

The Marquis of Argyle sealed with blood his testimony for the Covenanted religion of Scotland in 1661. Passing down the years of bloodshed which that mar-

tyrdom inaugurated, we come to 1685, when the fiery persecution which had raged in the reign of Charles II. waxed still hotter in that of his brother James VII.

The 11th May in that year was black in respect of the barbarous murders committed, but bright on account of the testimony borne to the sustaining power of a simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The testimony on this occasion was not that of noble-men who fought for high stakes and knew what defeat would bring; it was that of humble peasants, of young men and maidens not out of their teens. In the morning of that day a lad called Andrew Hislop saw his widowed mother's house pulled down, the furniture carried away, while mother, brother, and sisters were left to wander in the fields, all because shelter had been given to a proscribed Covenanter who came there to die. Later in the day Andrew himself fell into the hands of Claverhouse, who would have spared him had it not been for Sir James Johnstone of Westerhall, a renegade Presbyterian, who insisted that the youth should be shot on his grounds. With some difficulty three dragoons were got to execute the outrage. The muskets were loaded, and young Andrew was told to draw down his cap over his eyes. He refused, and stood confronting the murderers with his Bible in his uplifted hand. "I can look my death-bringers in the face without fear," were the words of this stripling hero. "I have done nothing of which I need be ashamed; but how will

you look in that day when you shall be judged by what is written in this Book ?” The body of Andrew Hislop, the boy-martyr of the Covenant, lies buried where he was shot in Eskdale Moor.*

While that was done in Eskdale, an act of still more revolting cruelty, if that were possible, was perpetrated in Wigtownshire. Margaret Lauchlison or MacLauchlan, a widow in the parish of Kirkinner, was, when upon her knees in prayer, carried to prison, where she was kept—so runs the kirk-session record—“without the benefit of light to read the Scriptures.” After being the inmate of more than one prison, she was finally sentenced to death at Wigtown by Grier-son of Lagg “for conventicle keeping and alleged rebellion,” this last charge being grounded upon her refusal to take the oath of abjuration with which the government followed up Renwick’s Apologetical Declaration. About the same time Margaret Wilson, whose parents lived in the parish of Penninghame, and who, with her brother and sister, aged respectively sixteen and thirteen, had been “keeping the mountains” rather than accept the test and hear the curates, was taken prisoner and thrust into the thieves’ hole of Wigtown. Tried at the same time, and found guilty of the same charges, the widow of sixty-three and the maiden of eighteen were sentenced “to be tyed to palisados fixed in the sand, within the flood-

* Wodrow’s History, book iii., chap. ix., p. 249 ; Lord Macaulay’s “History of England,” chap. iv.

mark, and there to stand till the flood overflowed them and drowned them." The awful sentence moved them not; they received it with a composed, smiling countenance, judging it all honour to suffer for the truth that Christ alone is King and Head of his Church. Part of the time between the passing and the executing of the sentence was spent by Margaret Wilson in writing to her friends, giving expression to a deep and affecting sense of God's love to her soul, and vindicating her refusal to save her life by taking the abjuration oath.

On the 11th May, amid a vast crowd of spectators, the two women were taken out to the bank below which the sea, when the tide is coming in, rushes up the channel of the river Blednoch, and gradually overflows the banks on both sides. Allowed to engage in prayer, they did so with such Christian calmness and sweet submission to the pleasure of God, and with such expression of dependence upon him for salvation through Christ, as to draw tears from some of the soldiers that guarded them. Cords were then tied at one end to two stakes driven deep into the sands of the bank, and at the other round the bodies of the victims, who were thrown over the brink of the river into the advancing tide of the terrible Solway. The death of the elder sufferer was hastened by the action of one of the town officers, who, keeping his halberd at her throat, held her body forcibly down till she ceased to struggle. Thinking that the sight of death

agonies might terrify her into submission, some in the crowd asked Margaret Wilson what she thought of her friend. "What do I see," was her reply, "but Christ in one of his members wrestling there. Think you that we are the sufferers? No, it is Christ in us; for he sends none a warfare upon their own charges." With a great deal of cheerfulness she prayed and sang verses of psalms, and repeated portions of the eighth chapter of Romans, while the flowing tide filled the deep channel of the river. Just before the bitterness of death she was pulled up to the bank on which her executioners stood, and when so far recovered as to be able to speak, she was asked if she would now pray for the king, and she was implored by pitying friends, "Dear Margaret, only say, God save the king!" With perfect composure she replied, "I wish the salvation of all men, and the damnation of none; God save him, if he will, for it is his salvation I desire." When, however, the officer in charge came up and demanded of her whether she would take the oath or return to the water, she deliberately put away from her the former alternative, saying, "I will not; I am one of Christ's children, let me go." "Upon which," says Wodrow, "she was thrust down again into the water, where she finished her course with joy."*

* The above narrative of the Wigtown martyrdom, which differs in some details from commonly received accounts, and corrects the inaccuracies of Lord Macaulay, is drawn from material to be found in Wodrow's History, book iii., chap. ix., and in "History Vindicated in the case of the Wigtown Martyrs," by the Rev. A. Stewart, 1869.

We have reproduced the scene at the water of Blednoch, not because of the barbarous cruelty of the death inflicted, nor because, having been subjected to the utmost severity of destructive criticism from Jacobite quarters, the story is now corroborated in every detail by a mass of evidence simply irrefragable, but because it bears witness to the existence in these heroines of Covenanting times of a faith in and an affection for the Christ of their salvation which carried them to a height of daring and enduring truly sublime. Whether the reader gathers his impression from the homely pages of Wodrow, the pictorial sentences of Macaulay, or the touching lay of Mrs. Stuart Menteath, it comes to the same thing in the end—he cannot put away the conviction that these women were not martyrs by mistake or out of mere enthusiasm. As the historian of the suffering Church of Scotland says, it is a jest to suppose women in their rank of life, and of their age, guilty of rising in arms and of rebellion. They were drowned because of their adherence to the Covenanting testimony of the Church of their day; and that testimony was dear to them because of the homage which it paid to the crown rights of their adorable Redeemer. And so there is truth in the artless words of the urchin who, guiding an inquirer in the churchyard for Margaret Wilson's tombstone, and bending over it with child-reverence in his features, exclaimed as he pointed to the scarcely legible in-

scription, "Look, she was but a lassie, yet she deed for the Covenant;" and there is truth in the statement of one of the lines of that rudely-executed inscription,—

"She suffered for Christ Jesus' sake."

All honour to the Wigtown martyrs!

"The earth keeps many a memory of blood as water poured—
The peasant summoned at his toil, to own and meet his Lord;
The secret hungering in the hills, where none but God might see,—
Ay, earth had many martyrs, but these two were of the sea." *

At an earlier stage we referred to the separation of the ultra-Covenanters from the general body of Presbyterians. The extreme party testified against acceptance of the indulgence, against paying the tax levied expressly to maintain the persecuting troops under the name of "cess;" testified in favour of armed conventicles, and in vindication of throwing off all allegiance to the House of Stewart. Those who thus testified came to be known as Hillmen, Society-men, Wild Western Whigs, latterly and more widely as Cameronians, from Richard Cameron, one of their most prominent leaders, who read the Declaration, and left it nailed on the market cross of Sanquhar in 1680. The official record of the doings of the Hillmen is to be found in a volume well known to historians of the period—"Faithful Contendings Displayed." The reading therein furnished cannot be said to be more interesting than what might be

* "Lays of the Kirk and Covenant," by Mrs. A. Stuart Menteath, 1850.

found in a volume of ecclesiastical minutes. The testimonies and declarations of the early Cameronians may constitute what Hill Burton calls a "literature of bewailment, remonstrance, and castigation;" but, as that historian admits, there is another literature of the period "of a sadder and sweeter character." To that we would fain turn in order to ascertain the religious life and spirit of those who suffered for righteousness' sake in the long dreary age of persecution. There is in our possession a little golden treasury called "A Collection of the Dying Testimonies of some Holy and Pious Christians who lived in Scotland before and since the Revolution." In this volume there is no sparing either of left hand declensions or of right hand extremes; there is the employment of abusive terms which no strength of conviction, no pressure of trouble can justify; and there is an indulging in dislikes and detestations, a lifting up witness and bearing testimony against individuals and parties, which appear far from seemly coming from those who set out by declaring they are "near to step into eternity." But there are also in this collection glimpses into inner spiritual life and experience of great beauty and tenderness, outbursts of rapture and attachment, felicitous turns and touches which even Sir Walter Scott would find it impossible to spoil through caricature. Janet M'Ginnies, "who lived in the Parish of Dalry, in Cuninghame, in the Shire of Air, and died in the Town of Dalry," gives

“a short but true relation of the Lord’s way of dealing with” her. And it is thus she expatiates:—
“Oh, what a sweet and pleasant life it is to travel up and down the fair field where the Rose of Sharon grows, where everything smells of that Rose! Oh, how pleasant is it for the soul to run to him and to seek everything from him that it hath need of! The soul, by a continued tract of going to the Lord, wins to be familiar with him. He (as it were) knows the knock of their hand, and they have a free and fair entrance to the chambers of his presence, where all their suits get a hearing, and that as often as they list (when there), so that I may say, Oh, how condescending is the Lord, to hear poor bodies’ secrets! And he imparts his secrets to them again! He feeds them with the secrets of his love. Oh, how great loving-kindness is it and favour that the Lord confers and gives poor things, when he puts such a noble and honourable piece of work in a poor body’s hand, as to be concerned in his noble cause with his headship in his house, and all his kingly and royal rights and prerogatives; in a day when all is going to wreck and ruin, when all that fair plenishing and vessels of the house are carried away into captivity, not only by avowed enemies, but chiefly by Zion’s professed friends.—*Sic subscribitur*, Janet M’Ginnies.”

One of the most prolix of the testimonies in this collection is that of William Wilson, “some time Schoolmaster in Park, in the Parish of Douglas.”

But the dryness and sternness of the document are relieved by the occurrence of such a statement as this —“Now, upon due and serious consideration of the Lord’s dealing with my soul, I am sure and certain that I have been in an actual state of grace more than forty and eight years. It is that long since I closed with Christ, at a dyke-side in Bettyknowes, in the Parish of Lochrooton, in Galloway.”

Robert Knox has something of the same kind to tell of when he thus appeals to One whom he calls “my former covenanted Lord and Master, my God, and my King:”—“Thou knows what did pass betwixt wretched me and holy thee in the Bought-hills, in the barn, and in the byre, and frequently about the yeard-dyke and the brae-nook down beneath it.” The lives of peril and of wandering which many of the Covenanters were forced to lead resulted in their associating localities with their spiritual experience in a way that imparts the picturesque and the vivid to their narratives. Thus James Masson, described as “that old, flourishing, and great Christian, princely wrestler with his Master, and valiant contender for Christ’s truths, and rights, and royal prerogatives,” tells of his taking the Covenant “in the Kirk of Traquier, about the year of God 1645. Four only of us, with the minister of the parish, took it there. When I heard it first mentioned I thought my heart flightered within me for joy. Then thereafter several times and in several places I took it—as at Dumfries,

Penpont, Kirkmahoe, and Irongray—which I never rued to this day, and hopes never to do.” Of communion seasons, as of Covenanting times, he writes with equal rapture. “The back-looking to them now and then,” he exclaims, “does not a little refresh my soul—as at Lochen-Kitt and the Shalloch-barn, where, besides the sweet manifestations of himself to my soul and the souls of many others then present, he was seen to be a wall of fire round about us, defending us from our enemies.”

CHAPTER III.

COVENANTING PREACHING.

Disadvantage of reports—Sir Walter Scott's caricatures—"Collections" of Howie of Lochgoin—John Blackadder's sermons—A free gospel—Gabriel Temple—Practical teaching.

WE have as yet said nothing regarding the influence of Covenanting preachers and their sermons upon the religious life of the times, preferring to take our illustrations from private rather than from professional walks of life. In the case of printed sermons purporting to have been preached at conventicles, there is this drawback under which they all labour, that, so far as can be ascertained, they were not published during life-time, and were not even published from the notes of their authors. They are simply bare outlines or skeletons of discourses furnished by hearers, mostly illiterate and not experts in the art of the reporter. Taken, however, as we have them, and allowance being made for the circumstances—so unfavourable to finish and elaboration—in which they were prepared and delivered, the specimens of Covenanting preaching

which are genuine show that the preaching of these days must have exercised a powerful influence on both the morality and spirituality of the people. If instead of taking his impressions of Covenanting preaching from the gross caricatures furnished by Sir Walter Scott in the wild rhapsodies of his fictitious Gabriel Kettledrummle, Ephraim Macbrier, and Habakuk Mucklewrath, any one will betake himself to the "Collections" of honest John Howie of Lochgoin, we answer for it he will find that the sermons preached and listened to by Covenanters were full of the marrow of the gospel, rich in their unfoldings of the doctrines of grace, marked by sobriety of spirit and plainness of speech. How earnestly the gospel call was pressed home in Covenanting preaching can be gathered from a sermon of Mr. John Blackadder's on the text: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied," in which the preacher pleads for the acceptance of his Master in this strain:—"Is there any of you that will give him the great reward he came to the world for—to save poor sinners? Have none of you a soul to save? That is the thing he seeks. Art thou in bonds under the devil? Art thou a poor, needy thing, made up of wants and necessities? And hast thou anything ado for him? Then let him thereby see the travail of his soul and be satisfied.....Is there any ungodly sinner, debauched profane swearer, drunkard,

ranter, or even the back of an old persecutor, or malignant? Hast thou any satisfactory news for us to take back unto our Master? Wilt thou give us these news to carry back, 'This day I fully renounce all my former kind 'of life and conversation, and resolve to stand to my word, and from henceforth will not go back nor turn from Thee at all'? Come away, poor man and woman, that is glad to close the bargain; thou that hast been, as it were, putting thy hand to the pen, and yet dare not seal it, wilt thou come and put thy hand to the covenant that thou hast entered into long since? He loves that thou should set thy seal to it; seal it with thy hearty consent; say with Thomas, if thou can say no more, '*My Lord and my God.*'.....For the Lord's sake do something satisfactory to him, and it shall be your own satisfaction for ever."*

How practically the morality of the Sermon on the Mount was inculcated is strikingly illustrated in what Gabriel Temple placed before his hearers as matter for Christian forgiveness and prayer with reference to the ten thousand Highland savages brought down and let loose upon the western counties of Scotland armed with dirks fastened to the muzzles of their guns, and provided, not only with spades and shovels and mattocks, but also with iron shackles and with thumb-locks to extort information from their prisoners concerning

* From "A Collection of very valuable Sermons, preached on several Subjects and in divers Places in the time of the Late Persecution."

treasure supposed to be concealed. Specifying times wherein God is to be sought and found, the preacher comes to the morning of the gospel, under which head he remarks :—"We have got a new morning of it now ; but there was a black night of it by the Glasgow Act in Scotland. Many places of the land to this day are like the land of Zebulun and Naph-tali, especially many of those places in the north of Scotland that are sitting in darkness. Pray for them. I think the Highland host that lately came from thence amongst you might draw prayers from you. What would they say ? 'Pity us ; we are your mother's children ; we were baptized in the same Church : ye minded your own corner, and ye see we are but a parcel of savages. Ye did not pray for us as ye should have done ; and it is but just with God that we should be a plague unto you. If ye have the light and the knowledge of Christ yourselves, ye care not for others, and therefore God has sent us to chastise you for this fault amongst others.'"*

When such was the preaching to be heard on the mountains and moors of Scotland, the gospel banner was not allowed to droop, but was kept waving till it attracted the vigilant eye of William of Orange, and convinced him that the nation which could maintain such a testimony for what Alexander Shields calls "these two twins, Religion and Liberty," was fast ripening for revolution.

* Howie's "Collection," *ut supra*.

CHAPTER IV.

SPIRITUAL OUTCOME OF COVENANTING EFFORT.

State of the country—Kirkton's testimony—A significant test—Andrew Donaldson of Dalgety—First Book of Discipline—The religion of the time.

IT may be said that it is not easy to judge the spiritual life of a people from the sentiments of their preachers; and some more direct evidence may be called for bearing upon the religious condition of both people and preachers. Such evidence is not wanting. Here is that of James Kirkton, the Chronicler of "The Secret and True History of the Church of Scotland, from the Restoration to the Year 1678:"—"At the king's return every parish had a minister, every village had a school, every family almost had a Bible; yea, in most of the country all the children of age could read the Scriptures, and were provided of Bibles, either by the parents or their ministers. Every minister was obliged to preach thrice a-week, to lecture and catechise once, besides other private duties wherein they abounded, according to their proportion of faithfulness. None

of them might be scandalous in their conversation or negligent in their office so long as Presbytery stood.....Nor did a minister satisfy himself except his ministry had the seal of a divine approbation, as might witness him to be really sent from God. I have lived many years in a parish where I never heard an oath, and you might have ridden many miles before you heard any. Also you could not, for a great part of the country, have lodged in a family where the Lord was not worshipped by reading, singing, and publick prayer. No body complained more of our Church government than our taverners, whose ordinary lamentation was their trade was broke, people were become so sober.”*

Into the piety of our Scottish Covenanters at a later date, when “Bloody” Claverhouse had the chief command in the west of Scotland, and employed dishonourable measures to discover the retreats of the intercommuned, we gain insight from what took place at Duchal Castle, Renfrewshire, in 1684. Thither two men had been sent to collect information. Professing to be persecuted Covenanters, they applied for quarters and food. Arrangements were made for accommodating them in the barn, and a supply of porridge was sent for their supper. They fell to eating the food *without asking a blessing*. That

* “The Secret and True History of the Church of Scotland, from the Restoration to the Year 1678,” by the Rev. James Kirkton. Edited from the manuscripts by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq. Edinburgh, 1817.

omission created suspicion in the mind of the servant who waited upon them, and resulted in the detection and summary expulsion of the pseudo-Covenanters.*

It may extend acquaintance and heighten appreciation of the practical side of Covenanting piety, if attention is directed to an east country minister of those days, and the ecclesiastical work of which he was the head-centre. Of Andrew Donaldson,† minister at Dalgety, Fifeshire, it was testified by the neighbouring minister of Inverkeithing “that he was singular for a heavenly and spiritual temper; and very much of a holy tenderness and ardent love to Jesus Christ at all times discovered themselves in everything he did.”‡ In 1664 the Bishop of Dunkeld, at the instigation of Archbishop Sharp, deprived this worthy man of his charge for venturing to preach without the sanction of the bishops. Ten years later he was “put to the horn,”—that is, denounced as a rebel; and in 1676 he was intercommunicated, the result being similar to the boycotting of our day. When an old man and infirm, he was forced out of bed and taken to Linlithgow prison, where he was confined for more than a year, being set at liberty after the Bothwell Bridge engagement,

* Wodrow’s History, vol. iv., book iii., p. 160.

† Material for the above sketch has been largely drawn from that most interesting work, “Glimpses of Pastoral Work in the Covenanting Times, etc.,” by Rev. W. Ross, LL.D., 1877.

‡ Wodrow’s History, vol. i., book i., chap. v., p. 409.

when he accepted the indulgence. What was the condition of things in Andrew Donaldson's parish during the twenty years of labour that preceded these sufferings? That can be gathered from such facts as these. Public worship was regularly conducted, forenoon and afternoon, winter and summer alike; a lecture was delivered on one of the ordinary days of the week; and a weekly meeting was held for catechising, to which the parishioners came according to the districts into which the parish had been divided. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed twice in the year; and prior to each celebration people of all ranks were examined by the minister with the aid of the elders. Some ten days previous to the communion Sabbath the young men and women who had been under instruction with a view to becoming communicants appeared before the session, and having been "seriously exhorted to study the knowledge of God and follow the exercise of piety," received tokens. The parish was mapped out into twelve districts or quarters, and the kirk-session numbered sixteen all told. Each elder was expected to visit his quarter, containing from twelve to fifteen families. When doing so he was "to take notice of such as want family worship, as mock prayer and the power of godliness, as are profane and scandalous, that they may be brought to censure; as also to take special notice of any that are gracious and seekers of God, that they may be strengthened and encouraged

in that way." Meetings of kirk-session were held weekly, and the usual day of meeting was Sabbath. The judgment of the Reformers, expressed in the First Book of Discipline, "that every several kirk have ane schoolmaister appointed," was carried into effect in the parish of Dalgety; and the school was diligently visited by minister and elders, who from time to time reported "that the bairns are in a good way of proficiency." Provision was made by the session for paying the school fees of those children whose parents were unable to meet them; and also for the spiritual instruction of herds, and "such as are tied to keep cattle in the summer season." Care was taken by the session that the Scriptures were placed within the reach of all, and were in the homes of the poorest, sums of money being frequently given out of the kirk-box for "Bibles to poor bodies," or for "poor folk in the parish." Out of the same box, replenished with the weekly offerings dropped into the "brod," was supplied relief to the ordinary poor, the casual poor,* the sick poor,† and the poor in time of war who "had been spoiled with the enemie."‡

Such items as these, illustrating the external machinery and the inner working of our Scottish Church during her Covenanting struggle, may tend

* "Given to ane pure distressed man that came from Ireland, lying sick in the bellman's house, 12s."

† "Given out off the boxe for the use off a poor diseased lasse, Francis Lamb, 42s."

‡ "Given to a lame souldier, 4s."

to show that the religious life of Scotland in those days was no fitful, spasmodic thing, which could only thrive in the excitement of conventicles and find expression in rhapsodical effusions; but that, on the contrary, it was intensely practical and methodical, concerning itself as earnestly as any evangelical Church of the present day in the welfare of youth, in the state of religion and morals, in the interests of all that is pure, lovely, and of good report.

It was a religion in all respects worthy of "times whose echo rings through Scotland to this hour."

DURING THE SECESSION.

By WILLIAM BLAIR, D.D.,

*Author of "Leighton," and Editor of Mackelvie's
"Annals of United Presbyterian Church."*

CHAPTER I.

THE PERIOD.

Relief brought by the Revolution of 1688—The reconstructed Church—Its defects—The Union with England—Lay patronage—Doctrinal controversy—"Marrow of Modern Divinity"—Rise of Moderatism—Hadow and Robertson—The "Marrow" men.

THE Revolution of 1688 was a great step in the religious life of Scotland. To the old Scottish Church it was what the return from captivity had been to the weary exiles. By the suspension of the penal laws against Nonconformists in 1687, Presbyterian ministers who were abroad returned home, and resumed their preaching in such places as could be provided for them. But the relief afforded was not on a large scale, and it was held by a doubtful tenure so long as James II. was the ruler. The Revolution, on the other hand, was the introduction of large liberty and freedom from civil pains and penalties to the oppressed heritage, in the possession of which they were as men that dreamed!*

* "It was a salvation never to be forgotten by the friends of religion and liberty. In particular, the Church of Scotland ought always to commemorate the glorious deliverance and revolution, 1688, whereby she was raised out of the dust, and to be thankful to the great God, the author thereof." Rev. J. Willison.

Forthwith, amid mingled emotions, began the reconstruction of the old Zion; for while many shouted aloud for joy, there were ancient men, that had seen the first house, who wept with a loud voice. Presbyterianism was restored, "the city was built on its own heap, and the palace remained after the manner thereof." About sixty ministers who had been in office before the Restoration survived till the Revolution, and became the Conscript Fathers of the Church-State. To them the king committed the keys of authority. As for William, he had no preferences for any ecclesiastical system except so far as it served his purposes; and latitudinarian as he was, and dealing with a mixed community, though he laid down a Presbyterian basis, he studied comprehension in the structure.

The spirit of compromise governed the reconstruction, and heterogeneous elements were drawn together that foretold disturbance, if not disruption, at no distant day. Prelacy was disestablished in July 1689; and in June of 1690, the Confession of Faith was ratified by Act of Parliament, and the Presbyterian government and discipline established, as in 1592. In the new programme of the Church the Covenants were left out in the cold—an intentional but ominous omission, in view of the wrangling and bloodshed of fifty weary years. "The strict Presbyterians brought themselves to accept the new ecclesiastical constitution under protest, as a large instalment of what was due. They missed indeed what they

considered as the perfect beauty and symmetry of that Church which had forty years before been the glory of Scotland." * Exception, too, was taken to the easy terms of admission which were held out to such of the Episcopal incumbents as should conform to the new *régime*.† In consequence it was seen that as in 1662 Presbyterians conformed to Episcopacy, so now there were Vicars of Bray who remained untouched by ecclesiastical changes.

The wall so built of distempered materials was liable to unsteadiness, and its stability was tested by the political changes that ensued. King William died, and was succeeded by Queen Anne; and then came the Union of England with Scotland, with all its safeguards and Act of Security, ratifying and establishing the Confession of Faith and the Presbyterian form of government, "to continue without any alteration to the people of this land, in all succeeding generations." This document looked like the Magna Charta of the Church, or as a sheet-anchor to hold her fast in all storms and commotions. The security was of the most limited description, both in time and degree. Five years afterwards, in 1712, the Jacobite and High Church party hastily re-imposed the yoke of Patronage—a bold stroke, in flagrant violation

* Macaulay.

† In the Royal Letter to the General Assembly, at which Lord Carmichael was High Commissioner, the king said: "Our authority shall never be a tool to the irregular passions of any party. Moderation is what religion enjoins, what neighbouring Churches expect from you, and what we recommend to you."

of the Union Treaty ; a piece of State-craft which well may be called "treacherous in motive and manner." Appeals and remonstrances were in vain. The chain was forged and riveted, and for the long period of one hundred and sixty-two years the Church dragged it along. "Even long before the Union," as Professor Story tells us, "the Church had dreaded a joint-attack through toleration and the restoration of patronage," so that the thing she had feared came upon her, and proved a most potent factor in the cleavages she sustained.

The mischief arising from the exercise of lay patronage was not immediate, as probationers for a time were shy of accepting presentations to benefices, and as the call of the people as well as the concurrence of the local Presbytery were required to give validity to the presentation. But in course of time patrons refused to relax their rights, and forced settlements of obnoxious presentees took place, sometimes even with the aid of a military force, and the rights of the people in the election of their ministers were trampled down.* In 1732 the General Assembly passed an Act restricting the right of election, under the *Jus devolutum*, to heritors and elders in landward parishes, and to magistrates, town councillors, and heritors in royal burghs. A paper subscribed by forty-two ministers and several elders was

* "These intrusions came gradually into the Church, but were not commonly practised, nor countenanced by superior courts, till after the year 1728."—Willison's "Fair and Impartial Testimony," p. 55.

submitted to the Supreme Court regarding that measure, which the Assembly refused to hear; and another paper on the same lines, signed by fifteen hundred people, was treated with greater indignity. The march of events was rapidly towards absolutism. For only two years before, the Assembly had decreed that the reasons of dissent against decisions and determinations of Church judicatories should not be recorded. This was an effectual means of stifling the voice of the minority and overbearing conscientious convictions, and all the more exasperating from the fact of its having been passed without observing the forms of the Barrier Act. Such a *clôture* was daring in its defiance of the constitution of the Church, and, "in the light of the spirit and practice of Presbyterianism, nothing short of a revolution."*

For now forty years the Church of the Revolution had been the religious mother of the land, and done homage to four sovereigns. Her career had not been uninterrupted, nor was her peace without conflict. In 1692 her autonomy had been challenged by King William through his Commissioner, and her prerogative of calling her Assemblies only saved by the courage of her sons. By the pressure of the Oaths of Assurance and of Allegiance in 1694, she was pushed to the very brink of rebellion, and delivered at the eleventh hour by the policy of self-sacrifice of William Carstairs. In 1712 her constitution was invaded by the

* Rev. Dr. Leckie.

Patronage Act, and the Oath of Abjuration almost rent her in twain. Two years later she was called to examine the quality of the teaching of her professors of divinity, in consequence of heretical tendencies on the part of Professor John Simson of Glasgow. The process of trial was tardy in its evolution, and, when completed, was strongly suspected of partiality; and, like smothered fire, it broke out afresh ten years afterwards with alarming consequences. Then there came the prosecution of a little book which Thomas Boston, minister of Simprin, had found lying in the cottage of a parishioner, and of which he had spoken to Drummond of Crieff as they sat together in the Assembly. The book bore the name of "The Marrow of Modern Divinity," and after being edited and reprinted with a preface by James Hog of Carnock, it became the missionary of new modes of preaching the gospel, to which some of the best ministers became converts, till they became involved in the *controversy* which the Assembly conducted. Principal Hadow of St. Andrews, by sermon and speech and pamphlet, impugned the "Marrow" and its defenders, and persuaded the Assembly to condemn the book and prohibit its use; and when a representation for liberty came up afterwards, the petitioners were rebuked for their pains.* There ranged under the St. Andrews princi-

* The names of the twelve ministers who signed the Representation for the Repeal of the Anti-Marrow Act were—Messrs. Hog of Carnock, Boston of Ettrick, Bonar of Torphichen, Williamson of Inveresk, Kid of

pal other two principals—namely, Stirling and Wishart, with Professors W. Dunlop and W. Hamilton of Edinburgh, and such ministers as Anderson of St. Andrews, and Craig, Flint, Smith, and Maclean, of Edinburgh; with Linning, Cameron, Ramsay, Gowdie, Colden, and almost all the friends of Professor Simson. The party of defence, besides the twelve already named, numbered such men as Sethrum of Gladsmuir, a man of a serene and saintly type of piety; Brisbane of Stirling, who is called “the learned and pious;” * Hamilton of Stirling (formerly of Ecclesmachan and Airth), the teacher of, and afterwards the successor to, Brisbane, as well as the true friend of Ebenezer Erskine, both before and after his secession. A like-minded neighbour was Warden of Gargunnoch, whose little book on “The Lord’s Supper” is still extant. Among other names that have floated down as defenders of the doctrines of grace are Cuthbert, Mair, and Fraser of Culross, Brown of Abercorn, Charles Moore of Stirling (the grandfather of Sir John Moore), Professor Osburn of Aberdeen, and Robert Riccaltoun of Hobkirk, whose grasp of theology and of logic were alike powerful.†

Queensferry, Gabriel Wilson of Maxton, Ebenezer Erskine of Portmoak, Ralph Erskine and James Wardlaw of Dunfermline, Henry Davidson of Galashiels, James Bathgate of Orwell, and William Hunter of Lilliesleaf. They were jeeringly nicknamed “the Twelve Apostles.”

* He wrote a Catechism “Concerning the Three Special Divine Covenants and the Two Gospel Sacraments,” on the lines of federal theology, the first-fruits of the Evangelical party. Brisbane published a sermon which was challenged.

† It is not pretended that these were the sole “defenders of the faith.”

On the merits of the "Marrow" controversy we do not enter further than to say that the abettors of the "Marrow" theology contended for a free, full, and unhampered offer of the gospel of the grace of God to men. Principal Hadow, and many of those who aided him in their prosecution, were of the ultra-orthodox Calvinistic type; and yet it is curious to reflect that they became, in the course of things, the forerunners of the soulless, sapless, "legal" preaching that sank down into pagan ethics in such men as Carlyle of Inveresk.

Principal Tulloch classes his predecessor Hadow with the founders of the Moderate school of the Church. Dean Stanley calls Leighton a "latitudinarian," and "the pattern of the Moderates in liberality and latitudinarianism of sentiment, the most moderate of divines in the apostolical sense of the word, which was the sense in which the Moderates took the name for themselves."* The term has a twofold import, describing the doctrinal form of the preaching and the ecclesiastical administration of the courts. As to

Currie of Kinglassie, Willison of Dundee, M'Laurin of Glasgow, Bisset of Aberdeen, were all valiant for the truth. But when the Representatives were before the Commission in August 1821, E. Erskine calls them "the poor handful." For fuller information regarding the "Marrow" men see Brown's "Gospel Truth," Edin. 1817; and Agnew's "Theology of Consolation," Edin. 1881.

* In a letter to the writer, of date 6th December 1873, the Dean uses the language we have quoted, and refers to the application of the term "for the first time by the Lord High Commissioner in 1690." It should have been "the Royal Letter," and not the Commissioner. Dean Stanley adds: "He was regarded on that account by Wodrow and others with the same suspicion as 'the Moderates' of later days have been since."

the former, it began with what were called "criminal omissions," or defective statements of gospel truth, and in course of time graded into cold Socinianism; and as to the latter, it seems as if the name of Moderate were misapplied by the toleration of error and the extreme rigour with which, under Patronage, unwelcome ministers were thrust on reclaiming congregations and parishes. Mr. Walker of Dysart is inclined to postpone the date of the beginning of the era of Moderatism till 1752, the time of the accession to power of Principal Robertson.* No doubt the party lines were hard and fast in 1752, when such a minister as Thomas Gillespie was incontinently deposed; but the lines were forming and becoming more and more visible before the party had such a leader as Robertson—"the prevailing party," as the seceders named them. And to find the natural progenitors of the party called "Moderate," who thwarted the popular will and withheld the simple gospel from perishing men through such a long period, we must go back to the early days of the Revolution Church. It was then the seed of dragons' teeth was sown broadcast which yielded a crop of armed men.

* "Scottish Church History," p. 111. Edinburgh, 1882.

CHAPTER II.

ORIGIN OF THE SECESSION.

Ebenezer Erskine's sermon at Perth—The Synod censure—Suspension and excision of the Protesters—Gairney Bridge—First Presbytery—Breach completed—Might they have returned?—Burghers and Anti-Burghers—Defenders of evangelical religion.

AS there were Resolutioners and Protesters in the Church before the Restoration, so in the Revolution Church there was a party of Constitution-
alists who claimed to be the representatives of the old Church; and opposed to them was the Moderate party, who constituted a majority in the Church courts. The enactments of the Assembly pressed hard upon the Evangelical party, and redress was sought in vain, as even reasons of dissent were not recorded. It seemed, therefore, that the pulpit and the press were the only channels of expression that were left open to the disaffected. In the belief that that was so, Ebenezer Erskine, minister of Stirling, as the retiring Moderator of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, on the 10th October 1732, preached a sermon at Perth from the text, Psalm cxviii. 22, "The

stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner." He took occasion to speak pretty freely against the defections of his Church and time, and "the invasions and encroachments made upon the authority of Christ, the rights of his crown, and the immunities of his kingdom." Using the figure of a building and of a man being regularly called to build, and of the call of the Church lying in the free choice and election of the Christian people, of the natural privilege of every house or society of men to have the choice of their own servants or officers, he asked, "Shall we suppose that God granted to any set of men—patrons, heritors, elders, or whatever they may be—a power to impose servants on his family without their consent, being the freest society in the world?" *

As soon as the Synod was constituted, some members complained that the Moderator had exceeded the freedom of the pulpit; and a committee being appointed to deal with him, the Synod sat out six sederunts, stretching over three days, when, on the 12th October, the following was the finding:—"After long reasoning as said is, the question was put: If or not Mr. Erskine be censurable on the account of expressions he emitted in his sermon before the Synod?

* "‘*The freest society in the world*’ are words which will bear frequent repetition and much pondering. It is on words like these that histories are built. They are words to inscribe on a banner, to be seen by friends and foes. To get down to the ground of these words and see their full bearing and application, how much does this involve?"—*Lecture by Rev. Dr. Leckie, Glasgow.*

Then the vote was stated : Censurable or not ? Rolls called and votes marked it carried by plurality : *Censurable.*" From this finding, fifteen members, including the Moderator, Rev. George Meik, dissented and protested. As Erskine had gone home when the Synod called him up to its bar, he was ordered to appear before the Synod in April next year. And when that occasion came he was refused a hearing, upon which he protested again and withdrew. He was recalled, and permitted to read his paper of defence.* The cause passed on to the General Assembly of 1733, which rebuked and admonished Erskine. He lodged a protest for himself and for three ministers, William Wilson of Perth, Alexander Moncrieff of Abernethy, and James Fisher of Kinclaven, who had appealed against the sentence of the Synod and adhered to the protest of Erskine. The Assembly disallowed the protest, and the paper, being thrown upon the table, might have been swept away

* Among other things, he said :—"According to the utterance given by the Lord to me at Perth I delivered his mind, particularly with relation to some prevailing evils of the day, which to me are matter of confession, and therefore I dare not retract the least part of that testimony. I am heartily sorry that ever the reverend Synod should have commenced a process against me for what I am persuaded was nothing else but truth ; especially when they have never yet made it appear that I have in the least receded from the Word of God and our approved Standards of Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government. Every man has his own proper gift of utterance, and according to the gift bestowed on me, so I expressed myself at Perth. And if I had given offence by any expression uttered by me at that time, I should very willingly retract and beg pardon ; but I hope my reverend brethren will excuse me to say that I am not yet convinced of any just ground given for a rebuke and admonition."

with the heap of unread and unrecorded ecclesiastical lumber, doing harm to nobody, and all four ministers might have exercised their functions and the liberty they claimed "to preach the same truths of God and to testify against the same or like defections of this Church upon all proper occasions." In that case the Secession would have been postponed, if not averted. But the paper fell from the overloaded table to the floor, and one of the members picked it up and read rebellion in it, and anew the Protesters were arraigned at the bar, and a fresh committee appointed to sit upon them. "The Four Brethren," as the Assembly called them, were in due course handed over to the Commission at its meeting in August, with a threatening of higher censure unless signs of penitence appeared. When August came, "the Four Brethren" had not changed ground; and though very urgent representations for delay of procedure came up from presbyteries and sessions, the Commission suspended the Protesters "from the exercise of their ministerial function and all the parts thereof." At next meeting of Commission in November, the question of "proceeding to a higher censure" was carried by the casting vote of the Moderator, John Gowdie, and on 16th November 1733 "the Four Brethren" were loosed from their charges, and their churches were declared vacant.

The Secession was now an accomplished fact. The Rubicon was crossed, and "the Four Brethren" went

forward with unfaltering steps in the way God led them.* Cast forth from their mother's door, they took the step of again appealing to Heaven for light and direction. The place of their meeting was a small wayside inn at *Gairney Bridge*, about three miles south of Kinross, with Benarty full in view and Loch Leven couching at its feet, and visible across the dim waters the old kirk of Portmoak. It was on the 3rd of December Ebenezer Erskine left Stirling for Dunfermline; and next day the two brothers journeyed on to Miss Bennet's cottage, where they were joined by the brethren from the north—Alexander Moncrieff, William Wilson, and James Fisher, and also Thomas Mair of Orwell, afterwards one of the Seceders. The next day was wholly spent in prayer and conference, and the day following witnessed the same fervent importunity, "till about two o'clock they came to the resolution of constituting themselves into a Presbytery, which accordingly they did."

It was in no schismatical spirit that the Seceders took up this new and unprecedented attitude to the Church of Scotland. Though she had cast them out,

* Before the Commission, in September, they met at Kinclaven, "seeking counsel of the Lord as to what they were next to do, and found that in their circumstances it was fit they should think, in case of their deposition next Commission, to be ready before it to constitute themselves into a Presbytery, and declare themselves not of the communion of the Church, with certain reserves."—*Life and Diary of Ralph Erskine*, pp. 203-4. Ralph Erskine and John Gow of Cargill were present at this conference as sympathetic correspondents.

they loved her, and claimed to be her true and faithful sons, as they had made a secession only from "the prevailing party, with whom they could have no ministerial communion, till they should see their sins and mistakes, and amend them." We verily believe the thought of their being regarded as the founders of a new Church, by which their names would be handed down to coming generations, was never present to their mind. If they appear to some to have been "sullen and stubborn towards the judicatories" of the Church, they were not so without good cause; and wherever there are deep conscientious convictions under strain, honest men cannot smilingly abandon them. No doubt there were men left behind in the Church "loyal to evangelical principle, and anxious to vindicate popular rights," and with such the Seceders lived on friendly terms. Others, such as Currie of Kinglassie and Willison of Dundee, renounced the Seceders and fulminated pamphlets against them.

It has been said that "had Erskine and his followers remained, as Willison and others did, co-operating against the abuses and corruptions in the Church, the labours of the Evangelical party would probably have been crowned with success—Patronage abolished and future secessions prevented." But it does not seem as if the facts of the case justify such prophesyings. The General Assembly did make a change of front in 1734, rescinding some of the

obnoxious legislation, because it had been found to be "hurtful to the Church," and recommending the Synod of Perth and Stirling to restore "the Four Brethren,"—which recommendation the Synod generously carried out. Not only were they reposed in their charges, but Ebenezer Erskine was chosen Moderator of Stirling Presbytery. Here was a door opened for reunion; was it unreasonable in them to decline the invitation to return? In this they were in a better position to judge than we are, as they were able to measure the full extent of the concessions made in their favour.* They were sensible of the kindness of their friends who obtained a respite from high-toned discipline, but they knew that the special acts of a repentant Assembly would not govern the Church for all time. And they grounded their secession not merely on the treatment they received at the hands of the Assembly, but on "a complex course of defection, both in doctrine, government, and discipline, carried on with a high hand by the present judicatories of the Church, justifying themselves in their procedure and refusing to be restrained."† The new

* Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, D.D., in his "Life of Dr. Erskine," 1818, p. 449, says:—"The members of the Church who had been most determined in disregarding the opposition made to the induction of presentees, if they concurred in this enactment [Act against intrusion of ministers into vacant congregations, 1736], could have intended it as nothing more than a concession, *in terminis*, to the prejudices of the people, without any view to its influence on their decisions in particular cases, or to such a change of system as could have had any practical effects."

† Wilson's "Defence of Reformation Principles," p. 40.

and strange zeal of the upper powers for reform was suspicious; and they spoke of "the lamentable consequences that have followed, and may yet follow, upon the separation of Messrs. Ebenezer Erskine, Alexander Moncrieff, and James Fisher, from this Church and the judicatories thereof," in the speech and tone of those who dreaded schism or dissent would weaken the power of the Church. We cannot charge Erskine and his associates with pride or vengeance engendered by the new position they occupied, or by the sense of injury awakened up within them. They claimed to be still a part of the old historical Church, the heirs of its grand traditions, and the sworn defenders of its truth and liberty.* It was not for them to forecast that "the little runlet which then began to flow would be swollen into a formidable flood."† Present duty, and not selfish or personal considerations, moved them to decline the *irenicum* of the Assembly, that they might be freer to resist the chill, cold air of the Deism and Rationalism of the age. Yet they took no immediate step to widen the breach, and their new Presbytery was two years old before it proceeded to acts of jurisdiction.

Would they have gained all they contended for by a return? There was a harvest waiting to be

* "The Seceders would have proved far from being wise as serpents had they listened to the charming of the dominant party, and certainly they would not have been harmless as doves."—Rev. Dr. Leckie.

† "Scottish Church History," by Rev. N. L. Walker. Edinburgh, 1882. Page 108.

reaped, from the sowing of the untoward legislation of bygone years, the upgrowth and fruit of the repression of popular freedom in the choice of ministers. These white fields of evangelization beckoned them to a work which they could undertake, in response to wide popular sympathies awakened by their contentings. Had they returned, their influence would have been absorbed—their high, resolute position compromised. “The centuries,” says Dr. Ker, “belong to those who know how to seize the hours. Had they re-entered the Church, and felt themselves compelled again to leave, it would have been to meet hesitation and chill of feeling among the people.” *

After all, the logic of events is the best settlement of doubtful questions. In 1740 the General Assembly deposed “the Four Brethren,” and four others with them. Seven years after this, the new Church was rent in twain by a wedge driving home civil oaths, and for other seventy-three years the disrupted body, under the vulgar names of Burghers and Anti-Burghers, maintained the struggle for existence outside the pale of the National Zion. But for the life and spiritual growth inherent in them, these two seceding Churches must have exterminated each other. Most certainly they clung to the traditional theology, when the majority of the churches of the Establishment had gone over to Moderatism, which excluded the gospel

* “The Erskines, Ebenezer and Ralph.” Edinburgh, 1881. Pages 36, 37. The passage is one of great beauty, and institutes a comparison with the cases of Spener and Francke in Germany, and Wesley in England.

from its system. Thomas Carlyle mentions that in his early days "a man who awoke to the belief that he actually had a soul to be saved or lost, was apt to be found among the Dissenting people, and to have given up attendance on the Kirk." Allowing for Carlyle's intensive and extreme statements, we are forced to admit that at the beginning of this century matters had reached a low ebb where Moderatism was in the ascendant, and had so continued for fifty years or more.

As if to pour contempt on the Secession, ignoring its existence, the policy of Principal Robertson and his distinguished colleagues was one of Erastian intolerance and utter evacuation of spiritual life. Who does not know the ecclesiastical tragedy, deplored by Churchmen and Dissenters alike, of the deposition of Thomas Gillespie of Carnock, the pupil of Doddridge, the correspondent of Jonathan Edwards, who, when deprived of his ministry, solely for conscience' sake, said "he desired to receive his sentence with real concern and awful impressions of the Divine conduct in it, but rejoiced that to him it was given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but to suffer for his sake"? Gillespie owed his conversion to the preaching of Thomas Boston, and Thomas Boston owed his conversion to Henry Erskine, the father of Ebenezer and Ralph; so that whatever of heredity Gillespie and the two Erskines owed sprung from a common source. The Secession and Relief

Churches united in 1847 into what is now known as the United Presbyterian Church, the representatives of the old historical Church of Scotland thereby finding their counterpart of truth, freedom, and catholicity derived from the liberalizing influences of the descendants of English nonconformity. In the two Secessions of 1732 and 1752 the men who acted the leading parts were men of God; and they were immensely helped in their contendings by the prayers and sympathies of God's people who were longing for deliverance. "The Seceders stood for truth and life in days when the battle went sore against them. And as long as truth and life are maintained in Scotland, it will not be forgotten that a great share of the honour of having carried them safe through some of our darkest days was given by God to the Seceders." *

* "Lectures on the Church of Scotland," by Principal Rainy, D.D., p. 142.

CHAPTER III.

TIMES OF REFRESHING.

Spiritual origin of the Secession—Movements of the Spirit—Germany—Moravia—Jonathan Edwards—Praying societies—Preaching of Whitefield—M'Culloch of Cambuslang—Revival at Kilsyth—Glasgow—Kirkintilloch—Denny—General spirit of inquiry.

THE Secession was an outburst of religious life, as incapable of being held in as the buds of spring can be prevented from breaking their sheaths by the chill winds of April. It was a spring-time which came not by observation, or human policy planning its own ways. The leaders of the movement were themselves led in a way they knew not. It was a time of conflict when new methods of action were taken, and new weapons furbished for the attack; when those that were weak were as David, and David was as the angel of the Lord. Though the combatants were few in their contention for truth and liberty, they had the moral support of the great body of the people, and the warm sympathy and concurrence also of not a few in the Established Church who were not at one with them on the

question of Secession. It is beyond dispute that there were ministers who preached a full gospel who yet remained within the old lines; and we proceed to notify the special times of blessing the Holy Spirit appointed to some of these.

We have the highest authority regarding the mystery of the operations of the Holy Spirit, and the limits of our knowledge of his gracious influences, which come and go like the viewless winds. We may not ask that old question, "Which way went the Spirit of the Lord?" but we can trace the vestiges of his operations when he comes down on the parched places as a dew of blessing. We can tell when souls are aglow with love to the Saviour, when spiritual decision takes the place of doubt and hesitation, and when worldly and torpid spirits get thoroughly roused and wakened out of sleep. It is a striking fact that the features of revived life in the Church in various periods of history bear so close a resemblance to one another, that the most recent seem to be but a reproduction of the most remote, the upheaval of life in the nineteenth century being in nowise different from that of centuries that went before.

In the year 1732 there was a remarkable outpouring of the Divine Spirit at Salzburg in Germany, when a whole community shook off the yoke of Rome, and willingly suffered the loss of all things for the gospel's sake. A similar effusion came upon the

Moravian Church in 1736, when their bishop, Count Zinzendorf, sent forth his missionaries to "Greenland's icy mountains and India's coral strand." On the other side of the Atlantic, at Northampton, in New England, there was a marvellous work effected under the able ministry of Jonathan Edwards, in the years 1734-35. Neither class nor age nor description was untouched. Within half-a-year, upwards of three hundred persons became the subjects of the renewing grace of God. George Whitefield visited Edwards in 1740, and his visit was followed by a fresh awakening, which extended over a wide area. Edwards published several works bearing on the revival,* which were extensively circulated throughout England and Scotland, and proved the harbinger of glad tidings to many.

Willison tells us that "promising tokens began to appear of a revival of Christianity in 1740 and afterwards; for in Edinburgh and elsewhere some new praying societies were set up, and sundry students did associate with them, which gave hopes of a further reviving; and for this many prayers were put up through the land, and that a good time before Mr. Whitefield came to Scotland."† The "praying societies" here mentioned were not a novelty. They seem to have originated in the early part of the

* One of these was, "Narrative of Surprising Conversions;" another, "Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England;" also "Five Discourses on the Soul's Eternal Salvation."

† "Fair and Impartial Testimony," etc. Glasgow, 1765. Page 109.

seventeenth century, when Prelacy was in the ascendant, as a relief for those that could find no life nor edification in the ordinary ministrations. The exercises at the meetings consisted of prayer, praise, reading the Bible, and mutual exhortation. After the Revolution Settlement, the praying societies lived on, under thorough organization and rule. There was one or more in each parish: in Portmoak, Ebenezer Erskine's first parish, there were as many as five. They met once a week; and when several of these societies assembled together, they constituted an "association;" and when delegates from these associations met once a year, they formed a "correspondence." In the case of the Cameronians, such "praying societies" were virtually congregations in a state of separation from the Established Church; but those to which we refer, while meeting privately, were in sympathy with the parochial agencies in so far as they ministered to the spiritual life, and constituted a network of spiritual influences by which the life of the members was held together, akin to that which obtained in the old Church in the last days of the Hebrew commonwealth (Mal. iii. 16). The longing for new and higher life found a vent in these praying societies.

It has often been observed that the tidings of revival have been, to those that received them, the means of revealing their own need of revival, of begetting an earnest desire for the blessing, and eventually conducing to its reception. This was

undoubtedly the case with those "outlettings of the Holy Spirit," as they were called, about the middle of last century, which came in response to the faithful ministration of the word, and the fervent supplications of the Lord's people, and which stimulated and sustained spiritual life within the pale of the Church of Scotland, in spite of the sapless, lifeless ethics which had been so widely substituted for the gospel. News of what great things God had wrought in America gave a finer edge to the preaching, and imparted a new impulse to the praying for showers of blessing similar to those with which he had refreshed their brethren across the seas.*

Another powerful factor in the production of the religious quickening of the period, was the singularly awakening preaching of George Whitefield. From 1732 and onwards, the University of Oxford had under training the men who, under God, were to revolutionize the religious life of England in the

* "Scotland was at that time favoured with the labours of many clergymen respected for their piety and talents, among whom were the Rev. W. McCulloch of Cambuslang, James Robe of Kilsyth, John McLaurin of Glasgow, Thomas Gillespie of Carnock, John Willison, Dundee, and John Erskine, Kirkintilloch, afterwards Dr. Erskine of Edinburgh. These gentlemen, and many of their associates in the ministry, preached not only with great plainness and fervency, but with the strongest confidence of immediate and great success; and as a natural consequence the Church of Scotland soon witnessed a state of things to which she had long been a stranger."—*Life of Jonathan Edwards*. London, 1840. Page cxiv. Letters bearing upon the revival in America and in Scotland, and also on points of theology, from the ministers named above, to Mr. Edwards, and from Mr. Edwards to them, will be found in Mr. Edwards's *Life*. Dr. Erskine invited Mr. Edwards to become a minister of the Church of Scotland after his separation from Northampton.

brothers Wesley, James Harvey, and George Whitefield. It is to Whitefield we now turn our attention as the pioneer of a great work in Scotland. We find him opening a correspondence with Rev. Ralph Erskine, 17th April 1739.* Eventually the Associate Presbytery invited Whitefield to Scotland in June 1741, and on 30th July he landed at Leith. It is not our business to discuss the rupture which took place between Whitefield and the Seceders. His visit extended to three months, during which he visited Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen, Montrose, Brechin, Forfar, Crieff, and other places. His preaching was charged with a life and energy to which the Moderate party were strangers. The Evangelical ministers rejoiced in him as a man after their own heart.† And though the Seceders no longer countenanced him, but deemed him as helping their enemies, he was moving on the same lines with them. The praying societies, regarding the spiritual harvests Whitefield was reaping as the dawn of better days, became more earnest “in their prayers and wrestlings with God, that he might pity them

* See “Life and Diary of Rev. R. Erskine, M.A.,” by Dr. Donald Fraser. Edinburgh, 1834. Page 297. Several letters are given, in one of which Whitefield says of the Seceders, “Though I die with you, yet by God’s help I will not deny you in any wise.” The narrative of the negotiations with Whitefield and the Associate Presbytery is also given. Whitefield calls them “a set of grave, venerable men.”

† Willison said of him: “This worthy youth is singularly fitted to do the work of an evangelist, and I have been long of opinion that it would be for the advantage of the world were this still to be a standing office in the Church.”

and the whole land, and pour out his Spirit upon them as on other places."

Ministers who had listened to the preaching of Whitefield felt a new force within them, and adapted their preaching more than before to the spiritual wants of their hearers. Among others, Mr. William M'Culloch, minister of the parish of Cambuslang,* near Glasgow, had begun a series of sermons on Regeneration, and in the end of January 1742, about ninety heads of families in his parish subscribed a petition "desiring a weekly lecture should be set up." This was granted; and as there was a meeting of praying societies on Monday, 15th February, at the manse, followed by another prayer-meeting on Tuesday "relating to the public interests of the gospel," a third meeting was held on Wednesday; and Thursday, the 18th, was the day of the weekly lecture. That was the beginning of a great commotion in the community; as many as fifty persons that day "came to the minister's house under convictions and alarming apprehensions about the state of their souls." In order to deal with so many anxious inquirers, not only the minister, but also some preachers and elders who assisted him, were occupied all that night and two or three more—exhorting, praying, and singing psalms; for hymns were not then forthcoming. The

* The parish of Cambuslang has now a population of nearly 10,000, and may be regarded as a suburb of Glasgow. Public works abound, but there are also parks with numerous "acres of skating ice" advertised for the benefit of winter pleasure-seekers.

desires and exigencies of the people were such that it was found necessary to provide daily service, with after-meetings for the inquirers; and during twelve weeks, three hundred were awakened to a deep concern about salvation. Ministers from neighbouring parishes and from a distance, visited Cambuslang to witness the wonderful work and assist Mr. M'Culloch. Among these we may mention Willison of Dundee, Connell of Kilbride, Dr. John Hamilton of the Barony, William Hamilton of Bothwell, William Hamilton of Douglas, M'Knight of Irvine, and John M'Laurin—each and all of whom give their attestations to the work. The ordinary communion in July was so appreciated that a second communion was kept in August, and was preceded by extraordinary meetings for prayer.* There were thirty thousand present at the tents, and three thousand communicants. The assistants were Whitefield, Dr. Webster of Edinburgh, M'Laurin and Gillies of Glasgow, Robe of Kilsyth, Currie of Kinglassie, M'Knight of Irvine, Hamilton of Douglas, Maxwell of Rutherglen, Adam of Cathcart, and John Bonar of Torphichen, the great-great-grandfather of the three Drs. Bonar who are still with us. Mr. Bonar was then upwards of seventy, and took three days to ride eighteen miles, and had to be lifted up into the tent. But such were his zeal and spirit that he preached

* Among other things, "they asked mercy of the God of heaven to themselves, and they prayed for the Seceders and others who unhappily oppose this work of God!"

three times with great acceptance. The evidences of the practical outcome of the movement were the reformed lives of those once notorious sinners; the laying aside of cursing, swearing, and excessive drinking; remorse for acts of injustice; restitution, forgiving of injuries, brotherly love, family religion, increase of societies for prayer, love to the Bible and the means of grace. Whatever objectionable features there may have been—such as physical collapses, shoutings, frenzied visionaries and delusions—it was obvious that the finger of God was in it, and “the Cambuslang work” left a large residuum of blessing.

In the wake of the religious outburst at Cambuslang there came the revival in Kilsyth, under the ministry of James Robe. That gentleman had ministered to his people about thirty years, and, like M'Culloch of Cambuslang, had latterly for more than a year been boring down to the foundation of things in a series of discourses on regeneration. News of the outpouring at Cambuslang rejoiced his spirit, and intensified his earnestness in prayer for the widening of the blessing to his own parish. In April 1742 Willison of Dundee came to Kilsyth, on his homeward journey from Cambuslang, and Mr. Robe induced him to preach to his people next day, Friday, when “a distinct, plain, and moving sermon” was preached from Psalm xl. 2, 3. Fresh from the scenes of the revival, with the smell of holy fire about his gar-

ments, he roused the people, and several experienced anxious concern about their souls. Mr. Robe on Sabbath resumed his exposition of regeneration from Galatians iv. 19, and displayed unusual tenderness even in the reading of his text. A few Sabbaths passed with slight movements of the Spirit on the face of the waters; but on 16th May, when he "pressed all the unregenerated to seek to have Christ formed in them, an extraordinary power of the Spirit from on high accompanied the word preached. There was a great mourning in the congregation as for an only son. Many cried out, and these not only women, but some strong and stout-hearted young men, and some between forty and fifty." The congregation was dismissed, and an effort was made to get the distressed gathered into the barn; but they were too many, so they were convened in the kirk. A psalm was sung and prayer offered, but when the minister tried to speak to them there was such a Bochim of bitter cries and groans and the voice of weeping that he could not be heard. For some time he had gone about in deep concern, thinking the Lord had passed by his parish; but now the wave of spiritual life came in like a flood. The river was overflowing its banks in the time of harvest. He ordered them one by one to be brought to him in his closet, while psalms were being sung in the kirk, and the precentor and two or three elders there prayed with the distressed. "It would have moved the hardest heart, that, as the

children of Israel under Pharaoh's oppression, when I spake unto many of them, they hearkened not, for anguish of spirit, and the sense of the cruel bondage they were under." More than thirty were that day awakened, and many more on the Wednesday following, when Warden of Campsie and John M'Laurin of Glasgow preached. The work went on with amazing success. "I looked up and saw what I never saw before—the fields already ripe unto harvest. I heard the Lord of the harvest commanding me to put in my sickle and reap. I considered that I had now an opportunity put in my hand that was not to last long, the harvest being the shortest time of labour in the whole year, and therefore I resolved to bestir myself to this very thing." Four days in the week were set apart for the awakened, who came from morning till night. Ministers and preachers also lent assistance; "but of all others, the Rev. Thomas Gillespie, minister of the gospel at Carnock, was most remarkably *God's send* to me. He came upon the Monday before the Lord's Supper was given in the congregation, and stayed ten days; and without him it would have been impossible for me to have managed the work of that week." Other ministers assisted in the work, such as Dr. Alexander Webster, Edinburgh; John M'Laurin, Glasgow; James Warden, Calder; John Warden, Campsie; James Burnside, Kirkintilloch; John Smith, Larbert; James Mackie, St. Ninians; Robert Speirs, Linlithgow; William

Hally, Muthill; David Blair, Brechin;* James Ogilvie, Aberdeen; Mr. Hunter, Saline; Mr. Porteous, Monivaird; and James Young, preacher. As at Cambuslang, there was an extraordinary communion in October, the service beginning at half-past eight in the morning, and continuing till half-an-hour after eight in the evening. There were twenty-two table services, each table consisting of about seventy communicants, so that upwards of fifteen hundred communicated. In many respects the movement resembled the times of reviving at Stewarton, Irvine, Kirk-of-Shotts,† and other places, in 1625, 1626, 1630, and those in Antrim in 1628, of which Robert Fleming, at one time minister in Cambuslang, writes in his book on “Fulfilling of the Scriptures.” John Livingstone and Robert Blair have written regarding the same awakenings. And to prove its solidity, the minister of Kilsyth, at a meeting of session in 1751, read over the names of above a hundred persons who had been brought under spiritual concern in 1742–43, almost all of whom had maintained a conversation becoming the gospel. Similarly Dr. Erskine, in 1748, bore testimony concerning his

* Mr. Blair was the first minister of the Church of Scotland who began to teach a Sabbath school, about 1760.

† In 1630 John Livingstone was preaching from Ezekiel xxxvi. 26, 27, and was on the point of closing his discourse, when a few drops of rain began to fall, and the people began to put on their coverings. He asked them if they had any shelter from the drops of Divine wrath, and was thus led to enlarge for nearly another hour in exhorting them to flee to Christ, with so much of the power of God that above five hundred persons were converted.—*Life of Rev. Wm. C. Burns*, by Professor Islay Burns, D.D., p. 95.

parish of Kirkintilloch, that one hundred had in 1742—43 become deeply concerned about their eternal interests. The outpouring of the Spirit in Kilsyth, under Mr. Robe, had a signal counterpart nearly a century later, under the preaching of William C. Burns, 23rd July 1839.*

The outpouring of the spirit of grace in Cambuslang and Kilsyth, in 1742 and afterwards, extended to the Barony of Glasgow, Kirkintilloch, Cumbernauld, Denny, Campsie, St. Ninians, Gargunnoch, Kippen, Carnock, Killearn, Muthill, Monivaird, Madderty, and other parishes. The evangelistic spirit was greatly fostered by the visits of Whitefield to Scotland between 1741 and 1767, during which period he had made at least thirteen visits. In 1751, he writes to Lady Huntingdon that for twenty-eight days together he had preached in Glasgow and Edinburgh to nearly ten thousand souls every day. "It would have melted your ladyship's heart to have seen us part." At his last visit the marks of affection towards him were as pronounced as ever. He writes: "Twenty-seven-year-old friends and spiritual children remember the days of old. They are seeking after their first love. Could I preach ten times a day,

* The service was on a Tuesday morning at ten o'clock, and the text was, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" (Ps. cx. 3), when "the feelings of the audience became too strong for all ordinary restraints, and broke forth simultaneously in weeping and wailing, tears and groans, intermingled with shouts of joy and praise from some of the people of God. Some strong men fell to the ground as if they had been dead."

thousands and thousands would attend. I am here only in danger of being hugged to death. Friends of all ranks seem heartier and more friendly than ever."

In conclusion, there can be no doubt that the extraordinary events that had their centre in Cambuslang and Kilsyth sent out vibrations all over the land, and were instrumental in promoting the practical religion of the time. To use the words of Sir Henry Moncreiff—"The converts of that time, who persevered to the end, would leave the impression of their characters on the society in which they lived; on the families whom they left behind them; and on all those who had the means of observing the effects of genuine religion which they exemplified; while the marked and continued testimony given by them in private life to the efficacy of genuine religion might go much further. It might operate widely during their own lives; it may be operating still in many forms which our observation can never reach."*

* "Account of the Life and Writings of John Erskine, D.D.," by Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, Bart., D.D. Edinburgh, 1818. Page 500. Dr. Erskine wrote a pamphlet called "The Signs of the Times Considered; or, The high probability that the present appearances in New England and the West of Scotland are a prelude to the glorious things promised to the Church in the latter ages." Edinburgh, 1742.—Other writers on the same subject were Rev. John M'Laurin, Glasgow; Dr. John Hamilton of the High Church, Glasgow; James Robe, A.M., Kilsyth, in his "Narratives of the Extraordinary Work of the Spirit of God at Cambuslang, Kilsyth, etc.," 1742, which was translated into Dutch; Dr. A. Webster of Edinburgh, "Divine Influence the True Spring of the Extraordinary Work at Cambuslang;" Dr. Gillies's "Life of Whitefield;" Willison's "Testimony."

CHAPTER IV.

REVIVALS IN THE HIGHLANDS.

Peculiarities of Highland religion—Course of the wave of spiritual life—
Mr. Hally of Muthill—Ross-shire awakening—Fraser of Alness—
Balfour of Nigg—Rosskeen—Golspie—Rogart—Moulin—Kiltearn.

THE religion of the Highlands has an individuality of its own, like the scenery and the ancient garb of its men. As befits “the land of the mountain and the flood,” where the sublime and the beautiful impress themselves on nature, it is of a pronounced character, with a depth and intensity that admit of no question. It is not superficial, but penetrates the man, vitalizing his being. Some contend that it is too subjective, too experimental; that its preaching and practice do not take in the details of daily life. Certainly there is a zone of spiritual ideas and feelings of marked difference when one passes from the Lowlands into the Highlands; a difference so far in doctrine and also in discipline, as the sacramental exclusiveness shows. The worship has an undertone of melancholy in it like the wail of a coronach from a silent glen. The singing of Gaelic psalms, preceded by the reading or rather chanting

of the line, in a prolonged fashion, interlaced with grace notes and improvisations in the minor mode, vibrating for several minutes over a single stanza, has a strange effect on a southern ear, and calls up the labours of Columba's missionaries, who itinerated far and wide, and gave the Celtic nature its first hold of the Christian faith. While the Highland religion is distinct from that of the Lowlands, just as the races and languages are distinct—a gulf, as it were, separating the Celt from the Saxon as to ancestry, and a formidable, forbidding barrier in the Gaelic tongue warding off the Southron—we cannot go so far as Dr. Kennedy would have us in differentiating the types of religion prevailing north and south of the Grampians. Perhaps we might, on Dr. Kennedy's showing, be inclined to use the words of the Apostle Paul on Mars' Hill to the men of Athens, with reference to the redundant beliefs of the men of the north. To employ the words of another: "The system of the Highlands we believe to have been defective, both externally and internally, in doctrine and in discipline; but the gospel force which descended upon the district and seized upon a people naturally religious and ardent was very powerful, and the system did supply important channels—not the least important those which were scooped out by enforced and abnormal overflow—for transmitting and diffusing it."*

* Article on "The Religion of the Highlands," in *The British and Foreign Evangelical Review* for July 1872, pp. 413-446, by Mr. A. Taylor-

The wave swept round the shores of the Moray and Cromarty Firths, and, so far as evidence exists, did not flow along the glens of the Grampians. We have no hesitation in affirming that both in New England, which was then a dependency of Great Britain, and in the south and north of Scotland, the religious current was one. Like the fiery cross of old which passed from hand to hand, rousing to battle the clansmen of a province, the sacred fire which the Divine Spirit kindled under the preaching of Edwards was transmitted to Scotland by such channels of communication as were then open; and "*The Monthly History*," published by Mr. Robe of Kilsyth in 1743 and afterwards, spread the flame over the land to give foreshadows of better days drawing nigh.

Mr. Hally of Muthill, for instance, relates that "after public worship crowds of people come to the manse, filling the house and the close before the door, discovering a great thirst after the Word, and such a concern in hearing it, that their mourning cries frequently drown my voice, so that I am obliged to stop till they compose themselves. Before this good work began, we had but two praying societies; and now they are increased to eighteen, with six praying meetings of young ones. With great satisfaction I admitted forty of these young ones to the communion Innes, in which the writer displays a masterly analysis of his subject, and an earnest sympathy with all that is highest and best in the religion of the north.

table this summer, which occasion the Lord signally owned." It was owing to Kilsyth, and the sympathy he had in the work there, that Mr. Hally was able to report such fruits among his people."*

Following the example of America, several ministers and others in Glasgow entered into a concert for prayer in the year 1744. Its continuance was originally contemplated for two years, but was extended to seven years. A part of Saturday evening and Sabbath morning of each week, and the first Tuesday of each quarter of the year, were the times appointed for this exercise. This concert survived the lapse of three generations, and like the fire on the altar of incense, kept burning on and on.† Where there was a faithful ministry, and a praying people waiting on such ministry, the seed was wafted swiftly thither and took root. Dr. Kennedy says the extensive revival that took place in Ross-shire resulted from the faithful preaching of the gospel, and was not beholden to extraneous agencies. He adds that "it was preceded by much prayer. It began in the hearts and closets of the people of the Lord." All true revivals are like John the Baptist with the

* Not fewer than twenty-seven persons from Muthill attended a great communion at Kilsyth in October 1742.

† So late as 1835 this concert was renewed and remodelled. Dr. Hamilton of Strathblane preached a special sermon on its behalf. These concerts for prayer were precursors and concomitants of the revival, preparing the hearts of the people for the new life, and preserving the sweet spirit of renovated affections from being crushed out by worldly pressure or conformity.

message, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The time of the Ross-shire revival, according to Dr. Kennedy, was after the first quarter of the eighteenth century had passed. Some of the ministers of the Synod were men of God, and had the seal of the Divine Spirit on their labours. One of these was Mr. James Fraser of Alness, who was settled in 1725, and is well known for his work on Sanctification. His preaching was pre-eminently awakening. To use his own phrase, "The Lord gave me a quiver full of arrows to be cast at the hearts of his enemies till the quiver was empty." Next came Porteous of Kilmuir, a Barnabas and son of consolation; and alongside of both were John Balfour of Nigg, M'Phail of Resolis, Beaton of Ross-keen, and Wood of Rosemarkie. All of these were honoured of God in winning many souls. We shall begin by noticing the revival under Mr. John Balfour.

The parish of Nigg, in Easter Ross, is a rich arable tract of several miles in length, with the hill of Nigg rising as a ridge, commanding a wide stretch of landscape. Conspicuous in the distance is Tarbert lighthouse; and nearer are the remains of the Abbey of Fearn, which has a sort of sacredness to our eyes as the abbey of which our martyr, Patrick Hamilton, was abbot. Before the Revolution, the curate of Nigg lived at some distance from his church, and the state of morals in the parish was low. Things

began to amend under his successor, Mr. Munro, who sowed the seeds of a better time. Mr. John Balfour was translated from Logie-Easter to Nigg on 21st March 1729, having received a unanimous call from the people. He had scarcely been settled more than a year when, by the Divine blessing on his labours, a revival of piety and life began. Meetings for prayer and religious conference were increased. With ebbs and flows the tide kept moving till 1739, when "several persons awakened and applied to their minister about their spiritual interests each day in the week for one week, Saturday not excepted. The awakening which had been here from time to time had not been in that extraordinary way, for the number of persons awakened at a time, nor attended at all with such unusual bodily symptoms, as were in sundry instances the effect of awakenings in some other parts; but in other respects the work of grace upon convinced souls appeared to be, in its rise, progress, and issue, in the same scriptural way, and the same in kind and substance, as in these other parts.....The general meeting for prayer and spiritual conference, which for some time consisted only of the members of session and a few others, became at length so numerously attended that it was necessary to divide it into two. Besides these general meetings, which convened in two places of the parish every third Monday respectively, and in which the minister always presided, there were

ten societies which met in several places of the parish every Saturday for prayer and other religious exercises.”*

The revival marched forward in 1744, “on new subjects more currently, with several more distinct and lively than formerly.” The Gaelic population knew only Gaelic, and were illiterate as to worldly matters; but, says Mr. Balfour, “I never conversed with more intelligent, savoury, and distinctly exercised private Christians than some illiterate men in this county. In the most literal sense, *Surgunt indocti et cælum rapiunt*—the men of letters dispute heaven, these live it. Oh, what a sweet significance there is in our Lord’s words, ‘*To the poor the gospel is preached*’ (πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται, ‘the poor are evangelized’).” Such was the earnest work which stirred the common heart of that parish all through the year 1744. Mr. Balfour wrote to Mr. Robe in January 1745: “To the praise of sovereign grace, matters proceed still in my parish as formerly. New awakenings continue, and those formerly awakened persevere, and, I hope, are making progress in Christian experience.” That Nigg was then visited by a blessed revival was the settled opinion of that good pastor who reaped the fruits thereof. He entered his rest in 1752, but

* It is a singular fact, that after nearly a century and a half the United Presbyterian congregation of Nigg maintains these same meetings, and on the same days of the week, as in the days of Mr. Balfour. After public worship on the Lord’s day the families of each neighbourhood meet for prayer and repeating discourses, as in 1744.

the work was not buried with him. The spiritual tone of the people was elevated, and to this hour one can feel, on coming into contact with the representatives of the older generations, that the blessing is there according to the Divine promise: "The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee."

In the correspondence Mr. Robe of Kilsyth had with Jonathan Edwards of Northampton, he writes on 16th August 1743: "I am not without hopes of having good accounts of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the shires of Ross and Nairn, among the northernmost parts of Scotland. There was more than ordinary seriousness in some parishes in hearing the Word and in a concern about their souls, in the spring, when I saw some godly ministers from those bounds. This more than ordinary seriousness in hearing, and about communion times, is observable in several parts in Scotland this summer. Societies for prayer are setting up where there were none, and in other places increasing." Mr. Balfour, already referred to, was one "of those godly ministers" from whom Mr. Robe derived his information. Another was Mr. John Wood, minister of Rosemarkie, who wrote in May 1744 regarding the state of religion prior to 1743 as low and disheartening. "Since the communion in July last the bulk of the congregation seemed to have a desire after instruction and the knowledge of the gospel much greater than formerly.

There are now about thirty persons under convictions and awakenings of conscience through the Word. I found several had been under some gradual work of this sort before, though they never discovered it till now." The same letter bears reference to "the Redeemer's grace and power appearing at Nigg, Rosskeen, Kilmuir, Logie, Alness, Killearn, Cromarty, and Kirkmichael."

The minister of Rosskeen was Mr. Daniel Beaton, who was settled in 1717, and is called "the first Presbyterian minister there since the Restoration." Things went on languidly with his people till 1742, when thirty-six persons "fell under a concern about their salvation," and were afterwards admitted to the Lord's table. "Boys and girls between nine and fifteen years of age met in a private house every Lord's-day evening and Monday's night, when they exercised themselves in prayer by turns, singing, and conferring about what they heard in public." Dr. Kennedy says: "At Nigg, Kilmuir, Rosskeen, and Rosemarkie, especially, the Lord's right hand wrought wonders of grace in turning many 'from darkness to light,' and in other places throughout the county many souls were then gathered to the Lord." The revival was extensive as well as intensive, though specific details regarding its progress are not available.

Thus far have we followed the tidal wave that swept round the Black Isle. It was a work of grace unattended by the external physical phenomena of earlier or

later times, such as "the Stewarton sickness," or "the strikings down" of the Irish revival of 1859. It was a calm, earnest, deep work of the soul, in which the conflict with sin was felt to be overwhelming and its guilt inexcusable, the only relief being found in the saving grace of God. Those who were awakened realized their need of a new birth, of their becoming little children in order to enter the kingdom of God, and gave themselves over to the regenerating grace of the Holy Ghost. And having found peace in believing, they grew up to the full measure of the stature of Christ, earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints; and as Dr. Kennedy says of them, "they were a preserving and seasoning salt to Ross-shire till the Lord removed them from it."

The only other place we notice to which the blessed influences of the revival extended in the north is Golspie in Sutherlandshire. This is on the verge of the Celtic frontier; but we may regard the work there as part of the Highland movement. Mr. John Sutherland was admitted minister of Golspie in 1731. Previous to 1688 Golspie had been a sanctuary for oppressed Christians, driven thither, like the men and women whom the persecution of Paul sent to Damascus, because they there enjoyed the protection of the Sutherland family, who steadily adhered to the interests of religion. These refugees became settlers, and instead of returning at the Revolution to their own locality, they evinced

their gratitude and attachment to the family by remaining there and becoming a blessing to others. The posterity of these early settlers in 1731 were devout Christians; but by-and-by they departed. There were few awakenings till 1744, and the minister had "greater fears than hopes." But when there came the inspiring intelligence of the success of the gospel in the British colonies of America, in the published accounts of it by Edwards and Cooper, Mr. Sutherland kept his people advised of these blessed and wonderful doings, and latterly, when there were "displays of Divine mercy and grace in Cambuslang, Kilsyth, and elsewhere," he communicated the glad tidings to his flock. When he returned from the General Assembly in 1743, and reported what with great joy he had observed at Kilsyth, Cambuslang, and Muthill, so as to provoke his people to emulation, no visible effect followed. In August he assisted at the Nigg communion, and opened his heart to good Mr. Balfour, lamenting his unsucces. Mr. Balfour told him how he had set up societies for prayer, from which he traced the success of the gospel among his people. Mr. Sutherland went home and did likewise; but for a whole year the Saturday night prayer-meetings brought no returns. How often has the same process of praying and waiting been followed in mission fields, as if to "prove herewith" those who prayed and waited! Let us hear Mr. Sutherland describe the final issue:—"But when our

hopes were almost gone, the great and bountiful God, who ever does wonders, was mercifully pleased to breathe upon a number of dry bones and to visit them with his salvation; for from the beginning of November till August there were upwards of seventy persons came to me under various exercises of soul." Some of them had been months "bowed down in spirit under a sense of guilt, but could not get themselves prevailed with to disclose their sad case to any." The work advanced in some slowly, in others more rapidly, but in both classes "a decent, grave, solemn deportment or shedding abundance of tears, which they concealed all they were able, were all the visible signs we had in time of hearing of the inward concern of their minds. About forty of them have with weeping eyes and trembling hands received tokens for the Lord's table; and it is hoped the rest will be encouraged to follow their example in a little time." We need not give details of the bodily effects of the awakened—their restless, sleepless nights, their loss of appetite, their bodily tremblings and strength diminished under apprehensions of the divine indignation. Nor is it necessary to say that God's own people were sensibly revived and enlarged, as is always the case in like circumstances, and "the secure multitude attended ordinances better and listened with greater attention to the Word." Most of the awakened were between twenty and fifty years of age, a few under twenty, and four only from sixty to seventy.

The preaching that had been most blessed was a course of lectures on the sufferings, death, and resurrection of our Lord.

In the neighbouring parish of Rogart in 1740 fifteen persons were awakened, and finding in 1741-42 a sad decay in practical godliness, they gave themselves to prayer, and in 1743-44 about fifty more were awakened, and went on in a hopeful way.

Not till the beginning of the present century, from 1745 onwards, was there any other general awakening.* God then visited the Highland parish of Moulin, under Dr. Alexander Stewart, with a plenteous rain; but the details of that blessed quickening lie beyond the scope of this chapter. Some seeds of plants and flowers are fitted with light wings, that, when fully ripe, they may fly abroad on the gentle air to reproduce their kind in fresh fields. It is our prayer and hope that the Divine Spirit may render these notices of bygone days of blessing in our land the seeds of fresh outbursts of life and fertility.

* Dr. Kennedy says: "There met at Kiltarn, on a communion occasion in 1782, under the preaching of Dr. Fraser of Kirkhill, perhaps as blessed a congregation as ever assembled in Scotland. Hundreds of God's people from the surrounding district were there, and all of them had as much of the comforting presence of the Lord as they were able to endure. It was then the culminating point of the spiritual prosperity of Ross-shire was reached. Under the ministry of the Calders, Macadam, Mackenzie, the Mackintoshes, Forbes, M'Donald, and others, the Lord's people continued to be edified, and souls were still 'added to the Church;' but the former days of power have never yet returned."—*Days of the Ross-shire Fathers*, p. 15.

IN THE
DAYS OF THE HALDANES.

By W. LANDELS, D.D.,

Author of "The Great Cloud of Witnesses."

CHAPTER I.

THE MAINSPRING OF THE NEW MOVEMENT.

Early Congregationalism—The Glasites—Ecclesiastical principles—
Faithful preaching of the gospel.

AMONG the waves of spiritual life by which Scotland has again and again been visited, the uprise of modern Congregationalism, both because of the principles at work in it and the results in which it has issued, well deserves the notice of the historian; and there are no names which can be more appropriately associated with it than those of the brothers Robert and James Haldane.

Congregationalism, however, did not originate with them. More than thirty years before they commenced their labours, Baptist churches, which were Congregational in their order, had been formed in Edinburgh and other parts of the kingdom; and nearly forty before that, the secession of John Glas from the Church of Scotland was followed by the formation of Pedobaptist Congregational churches which bore his name. But as these communities,

especially the latter, were small, meeting in hired rooms and without permanent place of abode, exclusive, moreover, and forbidding rather than evangelistic and aggressive in spirit, they could scarcely be reckoned among the ecclesiastical forces of the time. The Scotch Baptists, indeed, without advancing much, have been able, in some centres, to hold their ground from that time until now; and among several others which might be named, a large and flourishing church now assembling in Bristo Place, Edinburgh, represents that which was formed in 1765 by Mr. Carmichael, with whom was shortly afterwards associated in the pastorate the much more famous Mr. Archibald Maclean. But the Glasites are all but extinct. And modern Congregationalists, as well as the larger section of Baptists, trace their origin to the Haldane movement.

These results were not what the movement originally contemplated. In its first stages it was not ecclesiastical, but purely evangelistic in its character and aims. Nor did it spring from any proclamation of Church principles, but from the preaching of those great fundamental doctrines of the gospel which dominant Moderatism not only neglected but intentionally suppressed. It may safely be affirmed that no great religious movement ever sprang from a mere exposition of ecclesiastical principles. Questions of Church order and government—such as the comparative merits and claims of Episcopacy and Pres-

bytery and Independency, or those relating to the subjects and mode of baptism—important as they may be in themselves, are not the questions by which the hearts of men are deeply stirred, or which lie at the root of national revivals of religion. Even the movement which issued in the great Disruption of 1843, although it culminated in the triumphant assertion of the Headship of Christ in opposition to the encroachments of the State, derived its inspiration and its force from the great evangelical doctrines which had supplanted the cold morality of Moderatism in most of the pulpits of the land. So was it with the Haldanes. Congregationalism sprang out of the movement which they were the means of originating, and was adopted by them at an early stage in their course. It was partly forced upon them by the opposition they encountered from the National Church, of which they were members; approved of by them also as affording scope for the new life which had been awakened, and as countenanced, they thought, by the Word of God. But its propagation was never regarded by them as a part of their mission, and at the commencement of their work it does not appear even to have entered their thoughts. Theories of Church order and government were not what Scotland then required. She was not sufficiently in earnest to consider such questions. Their discussion would not have sufficed to rouse her from her indifference, even if the preaching which dwelt on them had succeeded

in gaining her ear. What she needed to rouse her from her spiritual slumber was the gospel of the grace of God. The faithful preaching of this gospel throughout the length and breadth of the land was the spring of the movement which led to Congregationalism, and to other good things which will fall to be noticed as we proceed.

CHAPTER II.

THE RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY AT ITS COMMENCEMENT.

Condition of Scotland—A Presbytery dinner—Missions—Moderatism
and infidelity—Neglect of discipline.

SUCH preaching was urgently required by the state of the Church and the country. It was what has been called “the midnight of the Church of Scotland,” at its darkest hour. While here and there evangelical truth was held and taught by faithful ministers in the Church and by the different bodies of Seceders, especially that founded by the Erskines, it was neither preached nor understood by the clergy as a whole. The visits of Whitefield, and the revivals of Kilsyth and Cambuslang, had either failed to move the Church generally, or their influence had gradually died away; and even some of the Dissenters, as will appear by-and-by, had lost their first love. “Many of the clergy,” says Dr. Hamilton of Strathblane, “were genuine Socinians; many of them were ignorant of theology as a system, and

utterly careless about the merits of any creed or confession. They seemed miserable in the discharge of every ministerial duty. They eagerly seized on the services of any stray preacher who came within their reach. When they preached, their sermons generally turned on honesty, good neighbourhood, and kindness. To deliver a gospel sermon, or preach to the hearts and consciences of dying sinners, was as completely beyond their power as to speak in the language of angels. And while their discourses were destitute of everything which a dying sinner needs, they were at the same time the most feeble, empty, and insipid things that ever disgraced the venerated name of sermons. The coldness and indifference of the minister, while they proclaimed his aversion to his employment, were seldom lost on the people. The congregation rarely amounted to a tenth of the parishioners, and the one half of this small number were generally, during the half-hour's soporific harangue, fast asleep. They were free from hypocrisy. They had no more religion in private than in public. They were loud and obstreperous in declaiming against enthusiasm and fanaticism, faith and religious zeal."

The biographer of the Haldanes mentions, as a "proof of the degraded state of the dominant party in the Church, a Presbytery dinner to which James Haldane was invited in Edinburgh, upon a special occasion, and to which he had gone, hoping for useful,

perhaps spiritual, or at least rational, conversation on those topics in which he was now chiefly interested. Instead of this, the company were treated to Bacchanalian songs, the folly of which was aggravated into something approaching to wickedness by an admixture of ridiculous, if not profane, allusions to their own sacred calling and functions. The burden of one song was the prescription of 'a bumper of Nottingham ale' in the pulpit at the different stages of a Presbyterian discourse."

With such a spirit prevailing among the clergy, it is not to be wondered at that an overture to the General Assembly of 1796, setting forth that "it is the duty of Christians to convey the gospel to the heathen world," met with little favour from that body. Although ably supported by Dr. John Erskine of Edinburgh, the leader of the Evangelical party in the Church, and one of the ablest of theologians, the votes, as has often happened, swamped the arguments, and the overture was summarily rejected by a large majority. The leading speaker in opposition to it, whose arguments were glossed over with an "affectation of reverence for the Word of God," was even honoured by election to the Moderator's chair. Thus did the supreme court of the Church justify the suggestion of Mr. Hugh Miller, that "its infidelity was of mark enough to have a character of its own; an infidelity that purported to be anti-Christian on Bible authority; that at least, when it robed itself in the

habiliments of unbelief, took the liberty of lacing them with Scripture edgings."

Another witness, who, according to the biographer of the Haldanes, "enjoyed the best opportunities of knowing the religious state of Scotland at the end of the last century," has thus testified in the *Quarterly Review*:—"We should be sorry to malign either the living or the dead; but it is our deliberate opinion that, with the exception of France, there was not a more infidel country on the face of the earth than Scotland sixty or seventy years ago; and we further believe that she was mainly indebted for this bad distinction to the active exertion of her professors, and the indifference, disguised under the title of *moderation*, which generally distinguished the teaching of her more accomplished and influential clergy."

With such ministers occupying most of her pulpits, we can very well understand that the ordinances of religion were attended to in the most careless and perfunctory manner, and not unfrequently, for slight reasons, entirely omitted. But many will find it difficult to believe that, in a Church in which the teaching of morality had taken the place of gospel preaching, such grossly immoral practices should have been tolerated as are mentioned by James Haldane in his journal of a preaching tour in the north, where he says of Caithness:—"It is a mournful fact that it is the universal practice to commute for a sum of money the public profession of repentance enjoined by

the Church of Scotland on those guilty of adultery or other open transgressions. When such persons have paid the fine, they are admitted to the communion table without scruple. When such practices as these take place to any extent, no wonder if the land mourns, and that the Lord threatens to visit us with his sore judgments."

CHAPTER III.

THE CONVERSION AND EARLY LABOURS OF THE HALDANES.

The Haldane family—A pious mother—Conversion of the two brothers—
Dr. Innes—Sale of Airthrey—Plans for India frustrated—The home
field—James Haldane and John Campbell—Evangelistic work—
Encouraging success.

WHILE this was the condition of the clergy generally, there were here and there in different parts of the country faithful evangelical preachers; and among many of the people there was the felt want of something better than the preaching of a cold morality, and also memories and traditions of the faithful evangelical preaching which they had enjoyed in happier times. These were somewhat prepared for the reception of the gospel, and provision was made for their want. The Lord had a favour to our land; and while the appointed guardians of the truth proved unfaithful to their trust, or failed to preach what they did not understand, he was raising up chosen instruments, and providentially preparing them for the accomplishment of

his gracious purpose. It is interesting to trace, as far as we may, the process by which they were graciously prepared for, and ultimately almost shut up to, that work which was to prove the great business of their life.

Robert and James Haldane were born to what may with propriety be called good estate. Robert, as the elder, inherited the broad acres and beautiful grounds of Airthrey, near Stirling, and James, from several minor properties, was possessed of a competence; so that both of them, when they had become the subjects of converting grace, were free to devote their time and talents to Christian work. Their father died before the younger of them was born, and their first religious instructions were received from the lips of a pious mother. After receiving a liberal education, such as became their position, they both in course of time entered the navy, where the younger remained until he reached the full rank of captain, and distinguished himself by the characteristic firmness and courage with which, during the absence of the captain and lieutenant, he quelled a mutiny in a neighbouring ship.

They experienced the saving change at about the same time, when the one was in his thirty-first and the other in his twenty-seventh year. But although up to this time they were in what the Scriptures call a state of nature, had not experienced the throbbings of the inner life, and were strangers to the heaven-

born principle which distinguishes the children of God from the children of the devil, they were not without serious impressions. The tones of a mother's voice linger in their ears, like strains of unearthly music from a far-off land, telling them of something higher and better than their present life. A mother's form comes up before the eye of their memory. The influence of a mother's prayers surrounds them; and now and again they are reminded of her instructions and her counsels: but as yet their impressions have issued in no decided results. Now, however, we perceive some symptoms of an approaching change. Shadows on the brow of the younger as he sits in the cabin or paces the deck of the *Melville Castle*; solemn musings on his responsibility as the commander of so many men; feelings tinged with melancholy as he sets out on his voyage, while his young wife is left behind, are soon followed by the earnest inquiries of a sinner seeking the Saviour, and these by the apprehension of Christ and the peace which passeth all understanding. The elder brother, expecting the regeneration of humanity from the French Revolution, was doomed to bitter disappointment; but the thoughtfulness thus excited led to a happy result. Grasping at a shadow, as he tells us, he found the substance. In his inquiring state of mind he was happily situated. Airthrey being near to Stirling, where the amiable and accomplished Dr. Innes was then settled, he had the opportunity of forming an acquaintance and friend-

ship with that good man which lasted through life ; and though it is not said that he was the means of his conversion, it is certain that their conversations, protracted sometimes till after midnight, had an important influence in fostering his religious decision ; and ultimately, in conversation with a humble stonemason during a walk through the estate, he saw clearly the method and ground of a sinner's justification, and entered on the enjoyment of settled peace. And thus it came to pass that within a short time of each other, though in different ways, the two brothers passed through the crisis of being, experiencing a change in feeling, in thought, in motive, in the principles and ends of action, the issues of which eternity alone will disclose.

The genuineness of their conversion was soon manifested in their efforts for the salvation of others. Naturally men of great decision and force of character, they could not be idle, but must throw all their energy into the propagation of their new faith.

After his conversion, Robert Haldane came to the deliberate conclusion, in which every man must agree with him, that religion if worth anything was worth everything, and, in consistency with this, resolved to make its promotion the business of his life. He accordingly, with a liberality seldom equalled, sold his ancestral estate of Airthrey, which he had beautified until its improvements, combined with its natural advantages, rendered it famous throughout the sur-

rounding neighbourhood, that he might devote its proceeds to the promotion of the cause of Christ. His first intention was to commence a mission in Benares, taking with him Dr. Bogue of Gosport, a man of great weight among the English Independents; Mr. Innes of Stirling; and his brother-in-law, Mr. Greville Ewing, assistant minister of Lady Glenorchy's, Edinburgh; together with a Mr. Ritchie, "a respectable and pious printer," who was to superintend the printing work of the mission. These were to be "aided by catechists, city missionaries, and school-masters;" and all of them were to be supported, the whole work of the mission carried on, at Mr. Haldane's expense. The scheme was a magnificent one, creditable alike to the Christian zeal and wisdom of its originator. But the opposition of the East India Company's directors prevented its being put into operation, and the funds intended for it were directed into other channels, in which, perhaps, they were not less usefully employed.

In the General Assembly's debate on foreign missions, previously referred to, an argument had been used by the Moderate party which bore fruit other than was intended—the argument that there were heathen enough at home demanding the Church's attention and energies before she sent out missionaries to heathens abroad. It is a stock argument still with those who seek to repress all missionary zeal, and to find a pretext for withholding the contribu-

tions by which foreign mission work requires to be sustained. It was not meant then, any more than it is now, to stimulate to home missionary efforts; for we cannot find that those who used it ever originated any such efforts, nor were they ready to countenance them when put forth by others. But the argument had sunk into the mind of Mr. James Haldane, and it led him to brood over the spiritual condition of his countrymen with very notable results.

He had not yet attempted to preach. It had been remarked by a friend that he "would by-and-by become a preacher," and by another he was asked the question if he did not regret that he had not been a minister. The suggestion pleased him, and in his heart he secretly cherished a desire for the work he deemed the most honourable. But he was not very confident that his wish would ever be realized; and he could only wait "in hope that the Lord would direct."

His entrance on the work was at length brought about through the acquaintance he formed with Mr. John Campbell, an ironmonger in the Grassmarket, Edinburgh, a most devoted and earnest Christian worker—"the living model of a city missionary, a district visitor, a Scripture reader, a tract distributor, a Sabbath-school teacher, and a Sabbath-school originator, long before Christians had learned to unite themselves together in societies to promote these objects;" and through him, with a Mr. John Aikman,

a gentleman who had also been in business, in the West Indies, which he relinquished from conscientious motives, and was now studying divinity with a view to the ministry of the Church of Scotland, which he was destined not to enter.

In 1797 James Haldane set out with Mr. Campbell on a tour through the west of Scotland, in connection with a society which had been formed in Edinburgh, "independent of clerical superintendence, for the establishment of Sabbath schools in destitute localities." Although he did no preaching on this tour, it was really the commencement of active service in the cause of Christ, which extended over more than half a century. It resulted in the formation of sixty Sabbath-evening schools; and it gave him such acquaintance with the religious condition of his countrymen as no doubt whetted and strengthened his desire for the work of preaching in which he afterwards so excelled.

His first sermon was preached at the village of Gilmerton, where a preaching-station had been opened by himself and Mr. Aikman, and was to be occupied by Mr. Rate, a student from Dr. Bogue's academy at Gosport. On Mr. Rate's being suddenly called to England, the duty of taking his place devolved on his two friends. Mr. Aikman at first declined to preach, and was only induced to consent by Mr. Haldane promising that if Mr. Aikman would supply one Sunday evening, he would undertake the next.

In this way it came to pass that he preached his first sermon on the 6th May 1797, and with such power and such results as, in the estimation of competent judges, proved that this was his proper work.

The correctness of this estimate was soon to be made manifest in a more conspicuous manner; for only a few weeks had elapsed before he was in the full swing of his ministry as an evangelist among his countrymen. It was in July that same year that, along with Mr. Aikman and Mr. Rate, he set out on a preaching tour in the north, after being commended to God in prayer in the house of their pastor, the Rev. David Black of Lady Yester's Church; and thus commenced that series of evangelistic journeys in the course of which, now accompanied by one friend and now by another, he visited every district of the country, preaching the gospel in nearly every town, and many of the principal villages, from the Orkneys to the banks of the Tweed.

A man of commanding presence and powerful voice, he was well qualified for such work. The fact of his having been a captain in the navy helped to attract large audiences. And, above all, the doctrines of the gospel, which were now a strange sound to many, thrilled the hearts of the people, and were welcome to them as cold water to thirsty souls.

In the prosecution of these journeys he had much to encounter and endure. Penetrating into the most remote and unfrequented parts, he sometimes, after

travelling and preaching by day, could find no better accommodation for the night than the mud floor of a Highland cottage. He was opposed by the clergy—dragged unjustly before magistrates—interrupted and assailed by men who called themselves gentlemen. Men of less nerve would have faltered before such opposition; but his constitutional qualities and his naval experience rendered him admirably qualified to grapple with and to master it. He had confronted death without fear; he had for years contended with the boisterous ocean, and controlled the more unruly passions of hundreds of untutored men; and he was not the man to quail before magisterial frowns or clerical intolerance. In spite of their opposition he went from place to place, preaching now in churches or in chapels, as the case might be, and now in the open air. In churchyard or college grounds, village greens or public squares, wherever people could be gathered together, crowds flocked to hear him, drawn at first perhaps by curiosity; but often those who came to scoff or to wonder remained to weep and to pray. Thus the movement as it advanced increased in force and volume. Larger numbers were attracted as the spiritual results became known. The hearers were animated by a more earnest spirit, and oftentimes in the drenching rain they stood listening with intense interest to his clear, faithful, and searching exhibitions of truth. Thus he scattered the good seed throughout the length and breadth of the land, and with results

bearing a closer resemblance to those which attended the preaching of Whitefield than anything in modern times.

To the movement thus commenced the attention of his brother, who had been frustrated in his missionary purposes, was naturally directed; and to its maintenance and organization he devoted the property originally designed for India. A fortune of sixty or seventy thousand pounds was, in the course of a few years, cheerfully spent in training hundreds of young men for the ministry, in building chapels or tabernacles, as they were called in various parts of the country, and in printing and circulating myriads of gospel tracts and other religious publications.

CHAPTER IV.

OPPOSITION.

Unwise method—Lessons of experience—Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home—Mr. Cowie of Huntly—Intolerance of the Church—Unfriendliness of the Seceders—Opening of the Circus—No thought of forming a new order of churches—What was chiefly regarded—Gradual formation of Congregational churches—Spirit of the Haldanes—English Evangelicals—Revived interest in religion—Marked attention to the gospel—A time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

THE preaching of James and his companions fell like a thunder-peal on the ears of a slumbering Church, and was not long in rousing the opposition of the clergy, whose false teaching their doctrines condemned, and to whose supineness their activity and zeal presented such a striking contrast. They were not very wise, perhaps, in the first instance. On his first tour, it was not an uncommon thing for James Haldane, at his open-air service in the after part of the day, to denounce the doctrines subversive of the gospel he had heard at church in the morning, and to caution the people against the false teaching of their own minister. This, of course, did not conciliate the clergymen whose discourses were made the sub-

ject of remark, nor did it command the approval of the Evangelical leaders who were well disposed towards the itinerant preachers. Even to Dr. Erskine, their boldness as laymen in attacking "the false doctrines of unfaithful ministers seemed subversive of Church order. To the judgment of such men they were willing to bow ;" and before setting out on their second tour, therefore, Mr. James Haldane and Mr. Aikman addressed a letter to the *Missionary Magazine* in which they announced their "intention to adopt a different line of conduct" in future. Their action, they say, "afforded a handle to those who did not approve of our design, to represent us as actuated by party spirit and ill-will to individuals. While we can safely say our consciences bear us witness that our motives were very different, yet we now see the propriety of cutting off occasion from those who seek occasion, as well as of removing prejudice from some of our brethren, who, in this particular, disapproved of our conduct. We accordingly take this opportunity to state, that we are resolved to confine ourselves in our intended journey to the declaration of what we consider as the truth of God, without making personal remarks on any individual."

This letter does not seem to have had much effect in disarming opposition. Even among the Evangelicals there were those who could not approve of lay-preaching as such ; and lay-preaching was increasing to an extent which could not fail to be disquieting

to the Moderates, although they had previously affected concern for the state of the heathen at home. Not content with such preaching being engaged in by those who, like Mr. James Haldane and Mr. Aikman, could do so at their own cost, the Haldanes, in December of that year (1797), established a society "consisting of Christians of different denominations under the name of 'The Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home.'" This society, whose funds were chiefly supplied by Mr. Robert Haldane, was not designed "to form or to extend the influence of any sect," but "to make known the evangelical gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by employing itinerants, schoolmasters, or others," on whom it neither conferred ordination nor appointment to the pastoral office, but simply sent them out to supply the means of grace wherever there appeared to be a deficiency. It was greatly blessed in its labours, ably defended in the *Missionary Magazine* by Mr. Cowie of Huntly, an Anti-Burgher minister, who was designated the Whitefield of the North, and by Mr. Greville Ewing in a sermon preached on behalf of the Edinburgh Sabbath-evening schools. It roused, however, the opposition of the clergy both in and out of the Establishment; and when the publication of Mr. James Haldane's journal of his tour in the north, which passed in a short time through three large editions, "served to swell the mingled tumult of censure and approval," the feelings which had long been surging found expression in formal votes passed in the

courts of the Churches, which confirmed the itinerants' determination to continue the course on which they had entered, and made manifest the impossibility of their working in connection with the ecclesiastical organizations to which they had clung.

As might have been expected, the most determined opposition to the new movement was offered by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. On the 28th May 1799, an overture was presented from the Synod of Aberdeen, and that of Angus and Mearns, respecting *vagrant teachers* and Sunday schools, irreligion and anarchy." "The Assembly unanimously agreed to the overtures, and prohibited all persons from preaching in any place under their jurisdiction who were not licensed as above; and also, *those who are from England*, or any other place, and who had not been educated and licensed in Scotland;—and resolved that a pastoral admonition be addressed by the Assembly to all the people under their charge." The Procurator of the Church was also empowered to proceed legally against unauthorized Sunday-school teachers, on the strength of certain obsolete Acts of the Scottish Parliament; and, as the biographer of the Haldanes remarks, "it was not owing to any forbearance on the part of the Assembly that the enmity of Moderatism was not manifested in the form of direct persecution."

Other religious bodies showed no greater friendship. The Cameronians, the Relief, the Anti-Burghers,

issued hostile decrees, which some of them enforced by excommunication. The Cameronians pronounced it a sin in their members to listen even to a missionary sermon from a minister who was not of their own communion. The Relief Synod, although their founder, Mr. Gillespie, had finished his theological education under Dr. Doddridge of Northampton, forbade their members to listen to preachers who had not been educated at some of the universities of the nation. The Anti-Burghers deposed and excommunicated the Rev. George Cowie of Huntly, of whom Dr. Morison, who knew him well, says :—

“He had no competitor, no equal in the north of Scotland. He was a man of genius, bold and fearless in all his movements, and in his feelings of charity and liberality half a century at least before the ecclesiastics of his day. In the pulpit Mr. Cowie was truly great. His appearance was that of dignified simplicity. He could declaim, and he could be pathetic. His discourses partook of the colloquial. He had studied human nature, and he knew how to approach it at every avenue. The power he had over an audience was great beyond description. He could make them smile or weep. His appeal to the conscience was unceremonious and direct. He never lost sight of the theme of the pulpit. All things were by him counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. He was a stern reprover of sin ; but he melted with tenderness over the sinner, beseeching

him to be reconciled to God. I have seen hundreds dissolved in tears under his ministry, and I have wept from pure sympathy when I was too young to understand his message."

And they cast him out because he went to hear such preachers as James Haldane—"for countenancing what are called missionary preachers, by hearing them preach, and in various other ways."

Such was the opposition they encountered in the various ecclesiastical organizations. Simeon of Cambridge countenanced them; other Evangelical ministers in the Church of England were favourable to them. Rowland Hill came down to Scotland to help them by his preaching and influence, and spoke and wrote valiantly in their defence. But Scotland, which had reaped the benefit of their labours, was forbidden by its ecclesiastical authorities to tolerate or listen to them. What were they to do? Succumb to the storm? quail before their opponents and persecutors? Their natural courage forbade that. Better still, they saw too clearly, and were too firmly convinced of their Divine mission, to admit of it. God had set his seal to their labours. They knew the blessing which had attended them in all parts of the country. They could say, like the apostles, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

The opposition only led them to take steps to con-

solidate and extend the movement. In 1789 the Circus was opened in Edinburgh as a place where different evangelical ministers might preach the gospel, and the seats being all free, the poor might be able to attend. A Congregational church was formed there, of which James Haldane was chosen pastor. From this church, which afterwards met in the Tabernacle, came that in Argyle Square, and now on George the Fourth Bridge; and, less directly, that which now meets in Dublin Street. Other tabernacles on a similar footing were opened in other places—one in Glasgow, of which Mr. Greville Ewing took charge; one in Dundee, of which Dr. Innes at first declined to become minister, because he had not made up his mind to leave the Church of Scotland, but afterwards consented when forced to a decision because required by the Presbytery of Stirling to take part in the ordination of an openly ungodly minister. Gospel tracts were freely distributed. At Robert Haldane's expense, young men of piety and promising talent received a short training for the ministry, partly under Mr. Ewing in Glasgow, and partly under Dr. Innes in Dundee—young men who, though unordained, could nevertheless tell to others the story of the Cross, and beseech men to be reconciled to God.

It was not in their thoughts to found a new sect or to form a new order of churches, but simply to spread the knowledge of the gospel among their countrymen. And had they been allowed to pursue

their evangelistic labours unmolested by the ecclesiastical authorities of the time; had there been spiritual life enough in the Church to appreciate their labours, or wisdom enough even to tolerate their zeal and turn it to account, they might have remained, to all human appearance, members of the Church of Scotland to their dying day. But the Lord was leading them by a way that they knew not, and to a position which they did not anticipate. A great principle, more important and vital than any question of Church order or Church government—a principle of which nearly all sections of the Church of Christ are now happily recognizing the importance, in theory, at least—required to be prominently asserted—and few men could be more favourably situated, or by their character better qualified for the work—the principle, to wit, *that only regenerate persons, partakers of spiritual life, are qualified for membership in the New Testament Church of Christ.*

This principle belongs to a different category from the independency and self-government of the several churches as held by Congregationalists, and ranks, in the judgment of those who accept it, next in importance to the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. It is, they believe, the principle on which the churches of the New Testament were based; for their members are called “saints and faithful brethren in Christ,” and are always spoken of and addressed as those who have undergone the saving change. It is a principle,

moreover, which they hold to be essential to the purposes for which churches exist, to the maintenance of Christian fellowship among their members, and to their success in the conversion of the world. Where the distinction between the Church and the world is obliterated—although in such a community the Lord knows those who are his, and those who fear the Lord, attracted by mutual sympathy, may speak often one to another—there is no cohesion among her members, and little power to influence the world for good.

It was this principle which the Haldanes and their friends had in view when the church at the Circus was formed in 1799. Two or three things were among the factors which led to this. Some of the English Congregational ministers who took part in the services at the Circus gave expression to their views as to the nature and constitution of a Christian Church. In 1795 a Congregational church had been formed in Paisley, and another in Aberdeen in 1798. The feelings in which the latter originated appear clearly in an extract from its Minute Book, given by Mr. Kinniburgh in his *Historical Survey of Congregationalism in Scotland*:—

“*Aberdeen, September 1797.*—For some time past several persons here observed and lamented that most churches or parties are remarkably strict in demanding assent and subscription to human creeds and confessions of faith; remarkably lax in their inquiries into the knowledge, experience, and moral character

of such as desire admission ; remarkably languid and indifferent about the one thing needful, and very zealous about some things needless.....They conversed about these things occasionally, and although belonging to different communions, they perceived that the love of God in the heart is a more sweet and steady bond than a professed belief of any human creed."

When formed into a church, as they were the following year, Mr. Kinniburgh says, "the brethren resolved to unite liberality with purity ; to abandon the lax worldly system of communion ; and to admit to occasional fellowship all who gave evidence of conversion, although differing from them in their modes and forms ; and that the pulpit of their chapel should be open to faithful ministers of every denomination who preached Christ Jesus and him crucified."

The brethren at the Circus were no doubt acquainted with these movements. They also knew of the meetings for prayer and Christian fellowship in which godly men in different parts of the country found means of fostering their spiritual life, such as their church services did not supply. These, with the things previously named, may very well have suggested to them the desirableness of forming a church which aimed at admitting to its membership only those who gave credible evidence of conversion to God. Such was the great object for which the church at the Circus was formed. Mr. James Aikman, who was

one of the original members, and afterwards co-pastor, gives the following account of its formation :—

“The chief principle which influenced the minds of the brethren who, I believe, constituted the majority of the small company first associated for observing divine ordinances in the Circus, was the indispensable necessity of the people of God being separated in religious fellowship from all such societies as permitted visible unbelievers to continue in their communion. This was a yoke under which we had long groaned ; and we hailed with gratitude to God the happy day when we first enjoyed the so-much-wished-for privilege of separating from an impure communion, and of uniting exclusively with those whom it was meet and fit that we should judge to be the children of God. Some of our brethren, however, did not unite with us on this principle. They were attached indeed to the fellowship of the saints, and would by no means consent to the admission of any amongst us who did not appear to be such ; yet they were not then convinced of the absolute unlawfulness of their continuing in connection with societies confessedly impure. Our brethren were well aware of our decided difference of sentiment, not only respecting the great inconsistency but also unlawfulness of any persons connected with us continuing to go back to the fellowship of those societies from which they had professed to separate ; and they knew that our forbearance did not imply any approbation of this conduct. Persuaded, however,

that they did not intend by this to countenance anything they judged to be contrary to the mind of Christ, we deemed it our duty to forbear, in the hope that that Saviour whom we trusted it was their supreme desire to serve and to please, would grant us the happiness of being likeminded in this as in our other views of promoting the honour of his adored name."

It thus appears that the formation of their first Congregational church was the result of their spiritual life instinctively seeking scope and nourishment such as they thought was not to be found in the societies with which they had been connected. It is true that their views of Church order and government were at a later date much more clearly defined, and firmly held as well as consistently carried out. But they never interfered with the Catholic spirit with which they regarded Christians of every name. In a letter, written in 1822, to a son who had gone to reside in London, James Haldane says: "I see plainly that the order of a Church is not unimportant; and that, although at present there are many defects in all parties, we ought to love all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and that our love to them ought to abound in proportion as we see the great features of the kingdom of God, righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, abounding in them; and when these are observed, it ought to enable us to throw a mantle of love over their defects." This was pretty much the

spirit, we believe, which actuated the Haldanes both before and after the division which took place on their embracing Baptist principles. Mr. Greville Ewing appears to have attached more importance to the principles of Congregationalism than any of his associates; but in this the brothers Haldane never sympathized with him, and their difference on this point was partly the cause of the estrangement which sprang up between him and the elder brother.

The formation of the church at the Circus was followed by that of others in different parts of the country, under men who, in Mr. Haldane's seminaries, had been trained for home mission work.

"So far," says the biographer of the Haldanes, "as these schemes were confined to the conversion of sinners, they were blessed in a way which commended them, in a greater or less degree, to the approbation of such men as Mr. Newton, Mr. Simeon, and Mr. Scott. But so far as they involved a new system of ecclesiastical polity, in the end they signally failed. To the poor the gospel was preached; sinners were saved, and Christians glorified. But when Churches were established on the fancied model of primitive times, they only flourished for a time." In the same connection he proceeds to speak slightly of the ardour of those who "think it as easy to reform wisely as to censure sharply, to apply the antidote as well as to indicate the disease, whether practical or theoretic, in any system of ecclesiastical polity."

Whether the “new system of ecclesiastical polity” ultimately and signally failed will appear as we proceed. Meanwhile the fact, which even this Episcopalian biographer does not question, deserves to be noted—that although the attention of their founders was occupied with ecclesiastical questions, there was no sign of diminished usefulness for some time after these places of worship had been opened. The Circus was found too small for the numbers who sought to attend; and when the Tabernacle was built, although it was equal in the accommodation it afforded to the largest church in the city, it was frequently crowded as the Circus had been by “thronging multitudes, hanging on the preacher’s lips, singing the praises of the Lord with their whole hearts, remaining during long services without wearying, and retiring in solemn silence, afraid, as it were, to desecrate the place where the Lord himself was present, and *that* presence was felt.”

There is little sign here that their attempt to establish a purer communion than they could find in existing Churches, and their adoption of a new ecclesiastical polity, had interfered with their usefulness. And how well the community they had formed served the purpose, and answered to the ideal of a New Testament Church, is also shown by the following testimony borne by Mrs. Matthewson, the daughter and biographer of Mr. Ewing:—“With many souls it was the season of first love; and even those who had

long known the grace of God in truth looked back to it ever after as a time of life from the dead. There was a fervour of spirit, a love to each other for the truth's sake, a delight in all the ordinances of the gospel, which makes it resemble more perhaps the Pentecostal period in Jerusalem than any that has succeeded it. The fear of singularity and the love of the world seemed alike for the time to have lost their power. The work of God, in seeking the conversion of sinners, was made the business of life..... The multitudes also who crowded to the Circus, the zeal and activity of those engaged in Sabbath schools and various other useful institutions, the intelligence received from others sent forth to more distant labours—all these were animating in the highest degree. They furnish in abundance topics for the most improving conversation, while they become alike the source of thanksgiving and encouragement to prayer.....To warn, to beseech, or to exhort their fellow-sinners, was a spontaneous delightful employment; to describe the blessedness of 'peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ,' was but to express the overflowing of their actual experience. And to crown all, they were at peace among themselves."

We do not think, as we have previously said, that views of Church order and government, however scriptural, will prove the spring of a national revival of religion, such as took place in the time of the Haldanes. Nothing but the faithful proclamation of

gospel truth will lead to that. But that truth proclaimed, and that revival promoted, should not prevent but secure our inquiring into the will of the Lord on such questions, and following it so far as it becomes known. It is the becoming too much engrossed in them to the neglect of other more important matters, and especially the controversial spirit which they sometimes kindle, not the giving due heed to them, against which we need to be on our guard.

The church at the Circus, as the foregoing account of it shows, was anything but a failure. Its membership increased until its dimensions and claims rendered it desirable that Mr. Aikman should be associated with Mr. James Haldane in the pastorate; and not long after, its size rendered it expedient that he and a number of the members should hive off and form another church in Argyle Square, which continues till this day, and after enjoying for many years the ministrations of the late Dr. W. L. Alexander, now meets in a stately edifice on George the Fourth Bridge, under the pastorate of Mr. Gregory, while others which sprang from them, more or less directly, assemble in different parts of the city. And much the same thing may be said of the other towns in which the Haldanes planted their tabernacles; and even throughout the country there are hundreds of churches, many of them in a thriving condition, which have been established, as their founders believe, on what is called "the fancied model of primitive times."

CHAPTER V.

CAUSES WHICH INTERFERED WITH THE PROGRESS OF THE MOVEMENT.

Differences arising—Testimony to the supremacy of conscience—Question as to Church fellowship—General awakening—Dr. Andrew Thomson—Mr. Greville Ewing—Troubles—The position of the Haldanes—Their biographer's estimate of their success—Has the movement been a failure?

OTHER questions, however, very soon arose which seriously affected the movement; questions which were fitted to test its genuineness, and which could not properly be evaded; questions relating to Church order and to the ordinances of Christ. The weak part of their work, in fact, was that these questions had been too long evaded. They ought to have been at the beginning thoroughly and prayerfully studied, and the conclusion, intelligently and conscientiously arrived at, acted on from the very first.

After these questions occupied their attention there was some apparent reason for speaking of their work as a failure, especially after they publicly avowed their adoption of Baptist principles, and were baptized

by immersion in 1808. But the failure was more apparent than real. Differences of opinion naturally arose; for it was not to be expected that a whole community would be prepared to follow its leaders in such a step. These differences, however courteously expressed, as naturally resulted in a degree of estrangement; for even good men cannot always agree to differ. The Tabernacle community was divided and scattered in consequence, and the influence the Haldanes exerted over a wider circle was also diminished. Yet, in our judgment, the step they took in carrying out their conscientious convictions was attended by at least a compensating, if not a greatly preponderating, good. It was a valuable and much-needed testimony to the supremacy of conscience. The Haldanes, Robert perhaps most conspicuously, had previously borne this testimony by the manner in which they had relinquished worldly possessions in obedience to their own sense of right. But the principle required then, as it does still, a more extended application. It is not enough that there should be a readiness to forego worldly good when the will of Christ requires; obedience to his will should not be withheld even for the sake of supposed religious advantages. Every believer is bound to make it the supreme and sole rule of life in all things. He is not at liberty to disobey even though obedience may seem likely to hinder his usefulness. Christ's will, so understood, must be done, be the consequences what they may.

The testimony which the Haldanes bore to this was enhanced in value by the so-called disastrous consequences which followed. The disruption and rapid diminution of the Tabernacle congregation, the loss of popularity and influence throughout the country, the alienation of friends with whom they had been lovingly associated, borne without a murmur, and without their questioning the propriety of the step they had taken, could not fail to exert a salutary influence on thoughtful men, elevating the standard of religious action as far as that influence was felt. Men who could meekly bear all this, suffer the loss of what they with good reason valued so highly, because strong in their sense of right, were men at once of sound judgment and heroic mould. Their example was of priceless value when men needed to be taught that on no account should they "do evil that good may come," and that not even the prospect of a great advantage to the cause of Christ would justify either a wilful neglect of duty or a slight deviation from the path of rectitude.

But whatever we may think of the wisdom or the unwisdom of their course, such men could not act otherwise than they did. Their past was the earnest of their future. Their antecedents might have led men to anticipate their action under the new conditions that had arisen. Having sacrificed everything for conscience' sake hitherto, they will not prove faithless to conscience now. Though that which they

hold dearer than either property or position—that for which they have already sacrificed both—may be at stake, they cannot refuse to do what their conscience tells them the Lord wills. We may think them mistaken in their judgment on this matter—many who admire their character do think them mistaken—but all must acknowledge that, understanding Scripture as they do, they have no alternative. Necessity is laid upon them. Like Luther at the sublimest moment in his life, they may each say, “Here I am. I cannot be otherwise. God help me. Amen.”

The Haldanes claimed the liberty to act out their own convictions, and desired to continue in Church fellowship with their brethren from whom they differed. To this some of those brethren would not agree. Thus the Tabernacle church was broken up and dispersed. Other causes, however, operated in the same direction. Their proceedings had lost the charm of novelty. The interest excited by the fact of two such men sacrificing their worldly position and prospects, and devoting themselves, their talents, and their means to the propagation of the gospel, one of them travelling throughout the country as an itinerant open-air preacher, the other countenancing and supporting him in his work, and contemplating and attempting schemes of quieter but more extended usefulness, naturally died away in course of time. The very success which had attended their efforts, moreover, rendered the carrying on of the work to

which they had been the means of giving such an impulse less dependent on themselves. Men trained under their auspices were now preaching the gospel in different parts of the country with a simplicity and directness something like their own. These rendered the preaching tours of the younger brother less necessary, while prolonged absences from home were prevented by his increasing duties as pastor of a church. Some who had been associated with them from the commencement of their public course were now, through the help they had afforded them, occupying prominent spheres, in which they attracted large audiences. Public attention had been roused to their statements of evangelical truth, and in other ecclesiastical circles than those in which they moved their doctrines were discussed. Those who agreed with them were emboldened by their courage to bear more pronounced testimony to the truths they held. Others who had more recently embraced them had become their most eloquent and efficient advocates. The conversion of Dr. Chalmers, which took place shortly after the events we have noticed, was an epoch in the history of evangelism in Scotland more important even than theirs. Fired with the enthusiasm of a young convert for the truth which had taken possession of him, he devoted his splendid talents and energies to the propagation of his new faith; and preaching the gospel with a force and eloquence all his own, he burst upon the country with a dazzling

brilliance which eclipsed all lesser lights. And while he was attracting all eyes in the capital of the west, Dr. Andrew Thomson of Edinburgh, with an equal energy and a clearer logic, though less gorgeous imagination, was in the zenith of his glory. Around these central luminaries various stars of greater or less magnitude were revolving; and when there were so many, and some possessed of superior talents to their own, preaching the gospel as freely and faithfully as they did—when their views of gospel truth thus ceased to be novel and singular, it was hardly to be expected that the Haldanes could retain the same prominence or exert the same influence as when, among all the ministers of the Church of Scotland, there were scarcely any who held it so purely, and none who preached it so faithfully, as themselves. It detracts nothing from their honour, however, that the movement they had been the means of originating grew until it passed beyond their own guidance and personal influence, and by its very magnitude threw its originators into comparative obscurity, while other men whom it had raised up took their place in the public eye, and became more prominently connected with it.

Then that aspect of gospel truth to which they gave prominence, although admirably adapted to the state of Scotland at the commencement of their course, had not the same adaptation to the state which afterwards obtained. We know the tendency of the

human mind to extremes, and the consequent reaction by which great movements are generally succeeded. When men were taught to trust, not in the Saviour's merits, but in their own virtue, nothing was so fitted to counteract the error as the assertion of man's entire dependence on God for salvation. By-and-by, however, a great part of the thinking community of Scotland had rushed to the extreme of theological belief. From many of the pulpits in which Moderatism had inculcated a heathen morality, men were addressed as if they were mere machines, having no power to comply with the requirements of the gospel, and assured that, notwithstanding their utmost efforts, there was no hope except for a few whose salvation had been eternally decreed. So extensively did this preaching prevail, and such was its influence, that many regarded the decrees of God as the cause, and not a few appealed to them in vindication, of their sin. It was evident that the doctrines which had formerly been so influential could not be so well adapted to this new state of things; yet, so far as we can learn, the Haldanes never saw the importance of giving prominence to that aspect of the truth which the change had rendered necessary, but rather opposed those who did, and thus failed to keep pace with the progress of a movement in the origination of which they had the honour of taking the most prominent part.

We must not overlook, however, the controversies

which arose, not only, not even so much, on the question of baptism, as on some other subjects, and the consequent dissolution of existing friendships. The difference between the elder brother and Mr. Ewing was especially painful, both to themselves and their friends. But that was not traceable simply to, although it was intensified by, the change of views the brothers had undergone. Mr. Ewing, who preached in the Tabernacle which Robert Haldane had erected in Glasgow at his own expense, and superintended the education of the students, was in the estimation of Mr. Haldane too pronounced and persistent in his advocacy of Congregationalism. This led to the removal of the students from Glasgow, and consequently to the termination of Mr. Ewing's connection with the educational work of the movement. There is some reason for believing that Mr. Ewing felt this somewhat keenly; and the dissatisfaction and irritation were increased when, after his change of views, Mr. Haldane demanded from Mr. Ewing's congregation the repayment of part of what he had spent in the erection of their tabernacle. Into the merits of this quarrel it is not our province to enter, but it brings us face to face with what we believe to have proved in the end a source of weakness. Helpful at first as supplying the means by which operations were sustained, the money of Mr. Robert Haldane became a hindrance and a snare when, through fostering a spirit of dependence in the people, it restrained their

own liberality. In another way, too, it may have proved detrimental to the prosperity of the Tabernacle church. The position and character of the men, the remembrance of their devoted labours, gave them legitimately a high place in the estimation of their fellow-Christians; and when to this was added the fact of their comparative wealth, they could scarcely fail to exert a predominating influence not quite compatible with the freedom and equality recognized in churches in which all members not only stand on the same level, but are entitled to a voice and a vote in the settlement of every question. From such causes we can quite understand how, without any defect in their order or organization, the churches they formed would, when their early fervour abated, naturally dwindle away, and thus afford some pretext for the assertion that they had "signally failed."

To endorse this statement, however, or to allow it to pass unchallenged, might lead to a very erroneous impression of the facts. Whether the churches were established only on the *fancied*, or on the *real*, model of primitive times, the attempt to establish them cannot be said to have proved a failure. Although their prosperity in the time of the Haldanes was interfered with by the causes we have glanced at, they have grown steadily from that time until now, when, including the three sections into which they are divided—the Congregationalists "pure and simple;" the Baptists, who have added their views of an ordinance to their

Congregational Church polity; and the Evangelical Unionists, who attach less importance to church order than to their views of gospel truth—they number in Scotland some three hundred churches, with an aggregate membership of more than thirty thousand. Can it fairly be said, then, that efforts to establish them have in the end signally failed? The end is not yet. But come when it may, we can see nothing to justify a prognostication of failure; rather do we trace such a steady growth as may end in a result such as few anticipate, and as it may not be wise for us to name.

Of the three sections, the Congregationalists proper appear to us to be now making the least progress; for they have about the same number of churches now as they had at the time of their jubilee thirty-eight years ago. But if so, the fact is not to be traced to any mistake on the part of the Haldanes or their co-adjutors. It may on quite other grounds be easily accounted for. A difference of church order is not enough of itself to prove a source of power. The question of whether each church should be independent and self-governed, or whether a number should unite and be governed by a Presbytery of their own election, is not one which possesses any great interest for ordinary minds; and it seems doubtful whether it be one on which Scripture gives any certain sound—whether, in New Testament times, it was not determined by the circumstances which existed in different localities. And if this has become the main distinction between

Congregationalists and their Presbyterian brethren ; if on the much more important question of purity of communion there has been a change of ground more or less perceptible, an approximation to each other in practice ; if Congregationalists, influenced by the broad views of some of their *confrères* in England, and other causes, have become less strict in their admission of members, while many Presbyterians, influenced by their Congregational brethren, have become more strict—Congregationalists have so far lost their coign of vantage, and under present conditions are not likely to make much way in Presbyterian Scotland.

The progress of the Congregational body proper, however, has been affected by another cause, which must not be overlooked if the position of Congregationalism is to be rightly estimated. There were many Congregationalists who became members of what are now called Evangelical Union churches, and several Congregational churches also joined or helped to form that body. These all retained their Congregational principles, without giving to them any great prominence. Their mission has been rather to proclaim the universality of the gospel provision. In the course of forty years they have grown until they number some ninety or a hundred churches ; while their most important work, perhaps, has been to diffuse among other bodies, in part at least, their views of evangelical truth.

In the other body we have named, Congregational

principles are more emphatically and prominently, and, we think, more consistently, taught than by either of the foregoing—the body of Baptists, to which the writer has the honour to belong. As we have seen, they carry out and emphasize the principle of pure communion by not only requiring a credible profession of faith as a condition of church membership, but also as a qualification for rightly observing the ordinance of baptism. They thus occupy a position distinct from that of all other bodies; and in this lies the reason of their mission and the source of their strength. Notwithstanding the unpopularity of their practice, their principles have continued to spread from the time of the Haldanes until now, and are spreading more rapidly now than ever before. The Baptist Union of Scotland, in which many Baptist churches, some of them containing hundreds of members, are not included, now numbers eighty-six churches, with about ten thousand members. Since its formation, not quite eighteen years ago, twenty-five new churches have been formed, and thirty-one new chapels built, exclusive of four now in course of erection. In addition to this, there are not a few Baptists connected with the churches of other denominations; and many more who look favourably on their principles without being prepared to adopt their practice. In view of these facts we cannot admit that their attempt to form churches on what they believe to be the New Testament model has signally failed.

CHAPTER VI.

THEIR WORK OUTSIDE CONGREGATIONALISM.

A concession—The great service which the Haldanes rendered—The elder brother's work abroad—The spiritual results of their labours at home—Their relation to the evangelical movement in the Church of Scotland—The spring principle of their whole movement.

IT is freely admitted, however, that the Haldanes' greatest work was done outside the churches they formed, and consisted in the services they rendered to evangelical truth. In addition to all at which we have so briefly glanced—the liberality of the elder, and the preaching of the younger brother—they both used their pens and their purse in producing publications for the exposition and defence of the truth. Robert was the abler writer, if James was the better preacher. But neither confined himself to either department of effort. James was the author of several important works. Robert, as co-pastor of the church at the Tabernacle, took part in the public ministrations; and the work he did by his oral teaching at Geneva and Montauban, the headquarters of Protestantism in France, was almost more remarkable

than anything that took place in Scotland. Both places were overrun with Rationalism and Socinianism. Tutors and students were steeped in infidelity. Robert Haldane's expositions of Scripture at Geneva were attended by almost the whole body of theological students. Out of twenty-five, all but one were touched, and the greater part of them savingly changed. In Montauban similar results followed, although not to the same extent. And when among those to whom his labours were blest we have to mention such names as Merle Daubigne, Malan, Monod, and others, it will be seen what a source of blessing his labours there have proved, not only to France, but to the world. How much they were directly or indirectly instrumental in accomplishing in Scotland it is impossible for us to estimate. Every good cause received their help, and profited by the influences they set in motion. Tract and Bible distribution received a fresh impulse. Continental and Home Missions were originated or supported. Foreign Missions had indeed been commenced in Scotland, although the General Assembly rejected the overture on that subject. The Edinburgh, afterwards known as the Scottish, Missionary Society, and the Glasgow also, had been formed, each composed of Christians of different denominations; but neither of them had been able to attempt much, and the latter had been singularly unsuccessful in finding suitable agents. The labours of the Haldanes originated a new order of

things. They had an important share in rousing a missionary spirit in the Churches, which has increased and strengthened until every important denomination has its Foreign Missions, and our country is now represented by some hundreds of agents, and annually contributes to the work of evangelizing the world some hundred thousand pounds. And, finally, who shall say how much we are indebted to their labours for that greatest ecclesiastical movement which living men have witnessed, which issued in the Disruption of 1843? Hundreds, there is reason to believe, who were converted by the instrumentality of the Haldanes, remained connected with the National Church. Their doctrines permeated that Church more or less, and their influence was felt throughout the land. And we cannot doubt that, could we trace those lines which are visible to God alone, we should find that these two men had an important share in bringing about that event, which has been justly said to be, notwithstanding all drawbacks, one of the greatest of modern times, and with which, in any age, there are but few to compare—the formation, or rather the reconstitution, of a Church whose subsequent liberality, activity, and enterprise, harmonizing with the self-sacrifice which marked its origin, have rendered it the wonder of the world.

We have only to add that the whole history, so far as we have passed it in review, both in the successes and the alleged failures it records, verifies the

observation with which we started, that the main-spring of the movement was not the advocacy of Congregationalism or any other principle of ecclesiastical polity, but the preaching of the simple gospel,—salvation by grace; justification by faith without works, and irrespective of frames or feelings; free forgiveness through the blood of Christ; implicit trust in him as the only and all-sufficient Saviour: doctrines which in substance have been the spring of every great religious revival—the Reformation in Europe in the sixteenth century, the awakening in England under Wesley and Whitefield, the great Free Church movement in Scotland, and others of minor note. These doctrines are as old as Christianity and as true. Modern discoveries have not disproved them. Modern inventions do not enable us to dispense with them. And the Church which substitutes for them human devices, or human learning, or systems of “philosophy falsely so called,” which places her dependence on something more suited to the wants of the age, will only succeed in writing on her front the deep imprint of disgrace, “Ichabod; for the glory is departed.”

DURING
THE LAST HALF-CENTURY.

By REV. NORMAN L. WALKER,

Author of Handbook of "Scottish Church History."

CHAPTER I.

THE RISE OF THE TIDE.

Date of the current era--Forecasts--Tides of thought--Movements for reform--Scottish characteristic--The Veto Act--New question raised--The stand made for Christ's supremacy--Revival--Robert M. M'Cheyne--William Burns--Widespread awakening.

THE later religious history of Scotland may be said to date from about the year 1830.

Before that year, however, there appeared in various places stirrings which seemed to forecast the beginnings of a new era. For example, the ministry of Dr. Andrew Thomson has been already alluded to.* That ministry commenced in 1814, and exercised an extraordinary influence on Edinburgh. "Occupying," as Dr. Buchanan says, "a pulpit in the very centre of the most influential classes, the prodigious energy of Dr. Thomson's character speedily gathered around him, and brought under the influence of his ministry, many of the most vigorous and cultivated minds in the city. And while his preaching was rapidly gaining for evangelism its former footing in those ranks

* By Dr. Landels.

of society from which it had been long almost excluded, his advocacy of Reformation principles, on the platform, through the press, and in the courts of the Church, was telling not less powerfully on men's views of ecclesiastical affairs."

A still more memorable event was the conversion of Chalmers and the bringing over in him of the ablest Moderate minister of the day to the ranks of the Evangelical party. That event resembled the accession to the early Church of the champion of Pharisaism. What the minister of Kilmany would have become had he continued as he began we can only guess. But we are absolutely sure of this, that so forceful a character as his must have told influentially on his generation in one way or another, and those are manifestly right who see in his change one of the turning-points of history. The conversion took place in 1810, and at that date there was certainly opened a new spring in the Scottish Church. The life which first appeared at Kilmany was transferred in 1814 to Glasgow, again in 1823 to St. Andrews, and yet again in 1828 to Edinburgh. Wherever Chalmers went there followed an intellectual and religious awakening. Glasgow was stirred to its heart by his preaching; in St. Andrews he not merely gave a new character to the moral philosophy which he taught, but imparted a fresh spiritual impulse to his students; while in Edinburgh, where at last he gained a position from which he could tell on

the whole Church, he became the leading spirit of the time.

Besides the two outstanding men we have named, there were others in various parts of the country who were helping to set the fire a-blazing. Edinburgh and Glasgow both enjoyed, before 1830, the ministrations of eminently godly men; and such men were to be found also scattered here and there alike over the Highlands and Lowlands. Not to speak of others, there was Dr. Macdonald of Ferintosh—the Apostle of the North as he has been called—who was ordained in 1813. And apart altogether from the Established Church, it is well known that a work of revival and reformation was quietly proceeding all through those days in connection with the labours of the Seceders.

Nor, in glancing back on those times, ought we to forget the stir that was caused in Scottish religious circles by the movement which was headed by Edward Irving and Campbell of Row. There can be no doubt whatever about the sincerity, earnestness, and ability of these men. Whatever we may think of their doctrines and methods, we cannot deny that they had something to do with the bringing in of the new era. Campbell was ordained in 1825, and deposed in 1831. Irving had his license taken from him in 1833. And in seeking for the springs from which the flood came, we cannot overlook the influence of either.

Perhaps it may be thought that with so many marks of a new life appearing in Scotland before

1830, an earlier date than that should be named for the chapter in our religious history to which we have now come. But the truth is, that all the streams we have spoken of might have issued only in local and temporary results, had it not been for other and later influences tending to give a national character to the movement which has more or less made the existing generation.

It is a noteworthy circumstance that every now and again a wave of thought and emotion seems to sweep in a mysterious way over the world, or rather over those parts of it that are in touch with one another. The secondary causes which produce this phenomenon can generally be pointed out easily enough, especially after the events are over; but the significant fact remains that like secondary causes are often seen at work without producing similar results, and the conclusion is suggested that God at times interposes in an extraordinary way in human affairs, and with the breath of his Spirit stirs men's minds into unusual activity. You have been out some still night while the stars were shining brightly, and all nature seemed hushed in sleep, when suddenly a breath of wind has sprung up, and you have seen it in a moment set all things in motion, and heard it rush as with a great sigh over the neighbouring woods. Such a breeze springs up every now and again, nobody can tell how, within the sphere of mind, and produces unaccountable changes in the con-

sciousness of nations. Men waken up as from a sleep, and a period of extraordinary mental activity supervenes.

The revival which thus takes place is not always religious in its nature. It may, to begin with, be only a revival of thought, of intelligence. But we need not doubt about the origin of it. The holy men of old, to whom we owe the Scriptures, spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost in a manner which gave a supernatural authority to their words. The sense in which the Bible is inspired is peculiar and distinctive. We must not, however, take too limited a view of the activity of the Spirit of God. It may be said of all the men of genius that have ever enlightened the world, that "the inspiration of the Almighty gave them understanding." And in the great intellectual awakenings which have taken place from time to time among the civilized nations, as well as in the religious revivals that have occurred in them, it is not only lawful but right to recognize the interposition of a Divine Mind.

It is a historical fact that one of these memorable seasons of widespread intellectual awakening took place about the year 1830. The tidal wave appeared first in France, where it produced a Revolution. It rolled on to England, and brought about notable political changes,—the Reform Bill, for example, which was carried in 1832. It told, too, upon the most conservative of our universities—1832 marking

the rise of that remarkable Oxford movement which, under Pusey and Newman, carried so many in the Church of England in the direction of Rome. And it influenced our national literature so distinctly that, among other things, a visibly new school of poetry was the result.

How did this wave tell when it reached Scotland? Its effects were equally tangible. But Scotland is a country which, ever since the Reformation, has concerned itself in a very special way about religious questions; and although it felt the swell of the tide like the other nations of Europe, and took its own share in the effort to promote political reform, the new life which appeared found most characteristic and most enduring expression in connection with ecclesiastical matters.

For example, the Voluntary controversy broke out about this time, and raged with a violence which of itself was an indication of the electric condition of the age. Then, too, we reach the beginning for the Church of Scotland of the missionary era. It was in the summer of 1830 that Dr. Duff first set foot on the shores of India; and when, a few years later, he returned to tell of his experiences, and the people were found prepared to welcome him with enthusiasm, the result was probably due not altogether to his own fiery eloquence, but in part also to the peculiar conditions of the period. The popular mind was no longer stagnant, but was alive and quick to take on

new impressions. But in 1834 another event occurred which, while it was not less certainly a natural outcome of the time, was still more far-reaching in its consequences. This was the passing by the General Assembly of the Veto Act.

We know it for a historical fact that the demand put forth on behalf of the people for the removal of their civil disabilities had a very direct connection with the rise of the Non-Intrusion movement within the Church. It began to be seen and felt that when the political enfranchisement of heads of households had been conceded, it would not do to keep the same parties in a state of pupillage in ecclesiastical matters. The power bestowed on lay patrons to appoint ministers to pastorates without regard to the feelings of those more immediately concerned might have remained unchallenged in a duller time—in a time when there was less mental activity; but in such a time as we have been describing, such an inconsistency could not long have been overlooked. As a matter of fact it was not overlooked. The aversion to the anomaly which had always existed in the minds of intelligent Presbyterians, looking at it from the historical side, was now strengthened by the sense or consideration of practical injustice; and as a consequence of the agitation which arose, a law was enacted by the Assembly decreeing that where a majority of heads of families (being communicants) in a parish objected to the settlement among them of a minister presented by a

patron, the Presbytery of the bounds should refuse to proceed to his induction.

We are now happily unanimous in this connection. Nobody in Scotland now-a-days professes to stand by the old theory that when a Christian congregation wants a minister it is unnecessary to consult it as to his acceptability. Patronage has been abolished, and in every Presbyterian Church in the world the standing of the people is recognized. But fifty years ago the justice of the principle of Non-Intrusion was not accepted as axiomatic. The demand for the popular rights, on the contrary, was regarded by many as the outcome of fanaticism or worse, and the granting of the very moderate reform of "the Veto" became the occasion of a far more serious agitation than the country had yet seen.

A new question, in fact, arose—a much deeper-cutting question—one which came to be regarded by not a few as involving directly the honour of Christ and the freedom of his Church in the world.

The question was raised by the civil courts,—which, in dealing with the cases of disputed settlements submitted to them, began to put forward titles to reverse and set aside spiritual sentences, to interdict where they pleased the preaching of the gospel, to order Presbyteries to ordain particular men or to refrain from ordaining them, and even to control Kirk-sessions in admitting applicants to the Lord's Supper.

We are speaking here, of course, not of the ecclesi-

astical but of the religious history of Scotland ; and in referring to the course of events just indicated, we are not called upon to go into particulars. Fortunately, too, in this, as in the other connection, we have in Scotland come to be, to a wonderful extent, of one mind ; that is to say, one does not often meet now-a-days any man claiming to have an intelligent acquaintance with what happened in those days who is prepared to argue that the civil courts were right. It is quite a common thing to hear from adherents of the present Established Church—descendants of those who fought for Erastianism in the 'Ten Years' Conflict—confessions to the effect that their fathers were wrong. If they themselves had lived in that generation, they would, they say, have been on the other side. And now they would be ready, they tell us, to have a reconstructed Establishment on practically Free Church principles.

All this must be gratifying to those who have fought for the now universally recognized truth all through, and it is well that the significance of the professed conversion should be fully recognized.

But the battle was a momentous enough one at the time it took place, and our special business now is to show how it affected the spiritual condition of the country.

It has been said that many were led to regard the encroachments of the civil courts on the domain of the Church as virtually trenching on Christ's honour and

supremacy. They believed him to be, not in a metaphorical or mystical sense merely, but in a very real respect, Head over his own house. What they inferred from this was that to disregard the rules he had himself laid down for the regulation of his Church was to be guilty of disloyalty to him. And in resisting the intrusion of a foreign authority into what they regarded as his kingdom, they persuaded themselves that they were lifting aloft again an old banner which their forefathers had fought under, and which had inscribed upon it the legend, "*For Christ's Crown and Covenant.*"

Now it is conceivable that those who took up this position deluded themselves,—that no question of Christ's honour was in fact concerned, and that what moved them to do what they did was not a genuine and intelligent sympathy with the Reformers and Covenanters, but simply some devout imagination of their own. Still, this is absolutely undeniable, that they earnestly and even passionately *believed* as we have said; and however we may account for it, that belief and what it led to came to be forces of extraordinary influence in shaping the spiritual history of the period.

It is here indeed, in our judgment, that we reach the point where the tide turned into that distinctly religious channel within which the conflict of those days took its best and most attractive colouring.

Most of the results spoken of above might con-

ceivably have followed without any special deepening of the spiritual life,—from the impulse imparted by the tidal wave which swept over a great part of Europe. The democracy had begun to assert itself. The people were demanding what they regarded as their rights. And the agitation for Non-Intrusion might have had very much the same inspiration as that out of which rose the cry for political reform.

But now a new thought, of a higher sort, was taking possession of the minds of many of the best of the Scottish people. Justly or otherwise, they saw in the struggle forced upon their Church by the civil courts the revival of an ancient conflict. The connection thus recognized led naturally to a fresh study of the history of Reformation and Covenanting times. And just as the reading of patristic literature promoted in Oxford a return to medievalism, so a review of what had been borne of old for the sake of the liberties of the Church issued now in the re-awakening of the Covenanting spirit.

That was not all, however. A far more important phenomenon also appeared. It is matter of history that the time of the Ten Years' Conflict became a time of spiritual revival. Evangelical preaching grew to be common everywhere. Those who had preached the gospel before did so now with increased earnestness and effect. And so widespread was the blessing that there was more appearance of life in the Church, and a larger number of apparent conversions, between

1835 and 1845, than there had been during the previous half century !

Is there any way of accounting for this ? It is, of course, always open to us to refer results to the sovereignty of God. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." But even spiritual movements have an intelligible history, and we have not a doubt in our own mind that there was a vital connection between the religious condition of Scotland at that time and the battle that was then fought for the honour of Christ. The significant parenthesis which we find in one of the Gospels to the effect that "the Holy Ghost was not given, *because that Jesus was not yet glorified*," had a plain historical meaning. The ascension was still future, and the time for the fulfilment of the promise of the Father had not arrived. But underlying the historical sense was an everlasting verity. The Holy Ghost is never given but in connection with the glorification of Christ. That truth has been proved over and over again in the experience of the Christian Church. Whenever, in the preaching of a period, Christ is allowed to fall into the background, spiritual deadness invariably ensues. Whenever, on the contrary, a change appears, and men begin to lift up the Cross before the sight of all, streams sooner or later break out in the desert. And here, I conceive, is the key to the history of the time. Even suppose it to be true that some illusions mingled with the strife, no one whose opinion is worth listening to for a

moment can doubt that Chalmers and his associates were honestly concerned for the glory of their Master. And the reward that came was precisely that which they were warranted to expect. The Holy Ghost was given, and what began as a movement for ecclesiastical reform developed into a religious revival.

It was in the General Assembly of 1838 that the Church formally and emphatically reaffirmed the doctrine of the Confession that the Lord Jesus Christ, as King and Head of the Church, has therein appointed a government in the hand of Church officers distinct from the civil magistrate, and declared its determination to maintain at all hazards the integrity of his kingdom; and it is, to say the least of it, a suggestive circumstance—a noticeable coincidence, if nothing more—that the year 1839 saw the commencement of a new series of religious awakenings, such as had not been witnessed in Scotland before since the middle of the previous century.

Among the saints in our Scottish calendar none holds a more honoured place than ROBERT MURRAY M'CHEYNE. It seems so long since he passed away that we tend to think of him as if he had belonged to a bygone age. But the truth is he might quite well have been labouring among us at this hour (1887). His contemporary and chief friend, Dr. Andrew Bonar, is still alive, and carrying on, single-handed, all the work of a city pastorate; while another associate, Dr. Somerville, is actively engaged

in the prosecution of an evangelistic scheme which seems to embrace as its sphere the whole habitable globe. Events succeed each other in these days with marvellous rapidity, and cross currents may arise to alter within a comparatively short time and in material ways the character even of one generation; but we can scarcely feel ourselves to be at an immeasurable distance from the beginnings of a movement when, though these date from half a century back, we have still with us men who shared in its origination.

M'Cheyne was ordained over the congregation of St. Peter's, Dundee, in 1836, and his ministry was a fruitful one from the first. But it was while he was himself in Palestine, as one of a deputation sent out by the Church of Scotland to prepare the way for a mission to the Jews, that the spirit of inquiry, which had previously appeared among his people, assumed the dimensions of a revival—this remarkable manifestation occurring in immediate connection with the labours of William Burns, who afterwards became so famous as a missionary in China.

Just a month before, it had been proved in a very notable way that upon that young preacher had been bestowed the gift of "utterance." While visiting his father, who was minister of Kilsyth, at the communion season, he had been invited to preach, and his preaching was "with demonstration of the Spirit, and with power." "During the whole of the time

that I was speaking," he himself tells, "the people listened with the most riveted and solemn attention, and with many silent tears and inward groanings of the spirit; but at the last their feelings became too strong for all ordinary restraints, and broke forth simultaneously in weeping and wailing and groans, intermingled with shouts of joy and praise from some of the people of God."

The movement in Dundee followed a few weeks later. "There was no visible or general movement among the people," says Mr. McCheyne, "until August 1839, when, immediately after the beginning of the Lord's work in Kilsyth, the Word of God came with such power to the hearts and consciences of the people here, and their thirst for hearing it became so intense, that the evening classes in the schoolroom were changed into densely-crowded congregations in the church, and for nearly four months it was found desirable to have public worship every night. At the time of my return from the Mission to the Jews, I found thirty-nine prayer-meetings held weekly in connection with the congregation, and five of these were conducted and attended entirely by children."

But the fire thus kindled was not confined to Kilsyth and Dundee. It spread on every side, until tidings of awakening came in from Perth, and Blairgowrie, and Jedburgh, and Kelso, and Collace, and many parts of the Highlands, and the whole land seemed more or less quickened and refreshed. We

associate the movement specially with the names of M'Cheyne and Burns, because the blessing came first in connection with their work, and also because, of the evangelists of the time, they were admittedly the chief; but there were others likewise who were then remarkably owned of God, and who, in connection with the religious history of Scotland, ought never to be forgotten—John Milne, for example, and Andrew Bonar, and Robert Macdonald, and Alexander Moody-Stuart. The ministry of these men told influentially on their generation, and much of what continues to be hopeful in the condition of the country at the present day is due to the influence they exerted.

CHAPTER II.

THE REVIVAL OF 1839-40.

Mr. William Burns in Aberdeen—The dissatisfaction of the *Herald*—A Commission of Inquiry—Testimonies as to results—The character of the preaching—The Presbytery's finding—Historical interest of the investigation.

ONE of the places visited by the Rev. William Burns during the revival of 1839-40 was Aberdeen. His preaching produced quite a commotion in the Granite City—so much so, that the *Herald*, a local newspaper, was scandalized at the fanatical manifestations which it witnessed, and did its best to write the movement down.

Its standpoint may be guessed from the following extract from one of its leading articles :—

“We have too much confidence in the good sense of our citizens to imagine that many of them will be smitten with the revival mania; still we are sorry to see it spreading to any extent, and we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact that the course pursued of late by our Non-Intrusion clergy, both in their public and private ministrations, has been the most effectual

paving of the way for such enthusiasts as Mr. Burns. Their sermons and prayer-meetings, although they do not exhibit the same extravagances in language and behaviour as those of the revivalist, have a strong tinge of the same character. They dwell almost continually on the mysteries of the gospel, and neglect to preach up its practical injunctions; they are at more pains to exaggerate the wickedness of human nature than to teach their hearers to correct such vices as they really indulge. If they would but enforce on their hearers the plain truths of the gospel, without leading their minds perpetually to the contemplation of abstract questions which cannot be solved, they would have a better chance of promoting virtue, and would be in less danger of bringing up a large number of their female hearers to be either fools or hypocrites. We trust that, after seeing the effect of their system of preaching and acting fully carried out in the case of Mr. Burns and his silly hearers, they will learn to throw aside their unscriptural affectations, and become a little more truly what they call themselves—evangelical preachers.”

These words, printed in 1840, will be read now with a smile. In the counsel given to abandon the evil practice of “dwelling continually on the mysteries of the gospel,” and to be content instead “to teach people to correct such vices as they really indulge,” we easily recognize the familiar handwriting of “the Moderate” of the time. But by its violent attack on

Mr. Burns, the *Aberdeen Herald* became unintentionally the means of rendering a permanent service to the Scottish Church historian. So frightful were the pictures which it drew of his meetings, and so shocking were its reports of what he himself did and said at them, that the Presbytery of the bounds felt constrained to interfere. Happily, however, that court did not allow its attention to be limited to the case of Mr. Burns. It recognized the fact that he was the type of a class—the representative of a movement which was threatening to become general; and to satisfy the public mind upon the whole question, it appointed a Committee on Revivals. That Committee addressed itself to the task assigned to it of investigating the whole subject in a most thorough and painstaking way. It summoned witnesses (including Mr. Burns himself and the *Herald's* reporter), and examined and cross-examined these in a manner which would have done credit to any civil tribunal. It put itself also into communication with such persons in the Highlands and Lowlands as were known to have themselves seen any of the “manifestations” disputed about. And, in the end, it came to the deliberate conclusion that, so far as they could judge, the great awakening, into the nature of which they had been directed to inquire, was a genuine fruit of the Spirit of God. The whole proceedings of this Committee were published at the time, and the Report, of which probably not many copies remain, constitutes an im-

portant historical paper, furnishing, as it does, most valuable testimony to the character of the time to which it refers.

For the fact that a widespread religious impression was then made, men in all parts of the country were ready to vouch. It may be interesting and useful to quote here what some of these witnesses had to say.

Mr. Andrew Gray of Perth, who was not a man likely to be led away by impulses or illusions, wrote under date of January 1841:—"In the month of February last year, sixteen persons applied to me for admission to the Lord's table. I saw them twelve or fifteen times, had private conversations with each of them, and had therefore the fullest opportunity of knowing their state of mind. I found that no fewer than ten of their number were under deep and solemn impressions of a religious nature, which had been derived from the ministrations of Mr. Burns; and eight of these, at least, I could not but judge, were truly converted from sin to holiness, from the power of Satan unto God. Never had I so interesting and delightful a class of catechumens as on that occasion. It may be supposed I have anxiously watched their subsequent deportment. I have done so; and I rejoice to state that all I have observed is confirmatory of the reality of that change which seemed to have taken place."

Mr. Milne of the same city told of "the unusual and long-continued thirsting for the Word which the

people manifested.....Night after night, for many weeks, the church was one dense mass of human beings, all the passages being crowded with persons who remained standing for hours together, and seemingly inaccessible to weariness and fatigue. I would observe, also, that the awakening extended to miles around."

Dr. Andrew Bonar, then of Collace, a country parish, reported his weekly prayer-meeting to be attended by five hundred persons, and added that a marked change had taken place on the whole aspect of the locality.

Mr. M'Cheyne also spoke of the impression produced on the general community. "It seems now to be allowed," he wrote, "even by the most ungodly, that there *is* such a thing as conversion. Men cannot any longer deny it. The Sabbath is now observed with greater reverence than it used to be, and there seems to be far more of a solemn awe on the minds of men than formerly. I feel that I can now stop sinners in the midst of their open sin and wickedness, and command their reverent attention in a way that I could not have done before. It is a different thing to preach to the people now from what it once was. Any minister of spiritual feeling can discern that there are many praying people in the congregation."

Testimony of a similar kind came from the Highlands, more particularly from Ross-shire and the

district of Breadalbane—the instrument used in these quarters being Dr. Macdonald of Ferintosh.

In every case the blessing came in connection with the preaching of the Word; and it is natural to ask what kind of preaching that was on which the Spirit of God put so plainly his seal. The Aberdeen Presbytery's Report enables us to answer.

An intelligent witness, in the course of his examination, was asked the question: "Have you ever made it your business to inquire what the particular circumstances were in Mr. Burns's preaching and addresses which produced a change, as you believe, on the hearts and characters of the [supposed converts]?" And his reply was as follows:—"They have told me that it was while Mr. Burns was stating the doctrine of complete depravity; of the impossibility of reconciling themselves to God; of the doctrine of divine sovereignty, as illustrated in the case of Saul of Tarsus, of the jailer, of Zaccheus, of the publican: at the same time directing them to behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world; of the duty and privilege of looking on Him whom they had pierced as applied to themselves; and of the encouragement held out to such to come to him, from such passages as, 'This man receiveth sinners,' that the effects referred to were produced."

A similar question was sent to the ministers and others at a distance, whose testimony was thought important, and their answers were all in harmony

with the account thus given. "One feature," wrote Mr. Cumming of Dunbarney, "distinguishing all these heralds of salvation who have been useful in alluring sinners to Christ (at least all those whom I have known), is the strong grasp they have taken of the doctrine of justification by faith, and the remarkable prominence into which they bring the enlivening truth that the obedience of Christ will be imputed to the sinner that believes, as if it had been his own. The distinct elucidation of this tenet has exerted a wonderful effect in enabling convinced and heavy-laden souls to arrive rapidly at a well-grounded peace."

"Ruin by the fall," was the reply of Dr. Macdonald of Blairgowrie, "redemption by Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, were the truths we chiefly preached, and which God seemed specially to bless. Plain and earnest statements of the gospel were, I conceive, the only means employed in promoting the revival."

"As to the causes why revivals occur in some parishes and not in all," wrote Dr. Andrew Bonar, "the causes surely lie in the divine sovereignty, *so far as respects all ministers who honour the Holy Spirit and preach the Lamb of God.*"

"I do not know of anything," answered Mr. McCheyne, "in the ministrations of those who have occupied my pulpit, that may with propriety be called peculiar, or that is different from what I conceive

ought to characterize the services of all true ministers of Christ. They have preached, so far as I can judge, nothing but the pure gospel of the grace of God. They have done this clearly, fully, solemnly, with discrimination, urgency, and affection. They all, I think, seek the immediate conversion of the people; and they believe that, under a living gospel ministry, success is more or less the rule and want of success the exception.....So far as I am aware, no unscriptural doctrines have been taught, nor has there been a keeping back of any part of 'the whole counsel of God.' ”

Once more: Mr. Purves of Jedburgh thus described his own method and its results:—"I endeavoured to proclaim the good news of a free salvation, through the blood of Christ alone, to the chief of sinners..... I attribute any change produced, under God, to the simple proclamation of a free, unconditional gospel."

The Presbytery, after hearing the report of their Committee, came to this definite conclusion:—"That the evidence derived from answers to queries sent to ministers and others in different parts of the country, amply bears out the fact that an extensive and delightful work of revival has commenced, and is in hopeful progress, in various parts of Scotland." That conclusion was not arrived at unanimously. A small minority of the members, sharing probably the suspicions of the *Herald* in regard to the general tendencies of the time, dissented from the finding of

their brethren. But they did not place on record the special grounds of their dissent, and we may reckon it as established beyond the possibility of reasonable question that, during 1839-40, a very real "time of refreshing" came to the Church of Scotland in connection with the earnest preaching of the fundamental points of evangelical religion.

CHAPTER III.

THE SUMMER OF THE DISRUPTION.

Greatness of the event—Impression produced by it—A year of grace—
The men who came out—Evangelicals in England and Scotland—
Baptism of the Spirit—An open ear—Fruit—The glory of Christ and
the gift of the Spirit.

SUCH an event as the Disruption of the National Church could not take place in a small country like Scotland without profoundly stirring the hearts of the people. In one day some five hundred men resigned their livings under the constraint of conscience, and went out into the wilderness, “not knowing whither they went.” The spectacle was one which produced a deep impression even upon onlookers from a distance who had no sympathy with the cause for which the sacrifice was made. Mr. Gladstone, for example, in a letter to Dr. Robert Buchanan, speaks of a friend of his, a conscientious and earnest-minded French Roman Catholic, who once told him “that amidst his discouragements in witnessing the progress of unbelief in so many quarters, he had found a singular comfort in the testimony borne by the minis-

ters and members of the Free Church of Scotland to the authority of conscience and of positive religious belief."

Men of the world, judging others by themselves, scoffed at the idea of those who were in the enjoyment of comfortable livings surrendering these for the sake of a principle. And the damage to the cause of religion, and even of morality, would have been incalculable if the conflict which had gone on for ten years before 1843 had ended in a *fiasco*. As it was, however, the issue was very different. It culminated, on the contrary, in a demonstration so remarkable that to find a parallel to it in Scottish religious history we must go back to the ejection era of 1662. Lord Jeffrey, Dr. Hanna tells, was sitting reading, on the day of the Disruption, in his quiet room, when one burst in upon him, saying, "Well! what do you think of it?—more than four hundred of them are actually out!" The book was flung aside, and springing to his feet, Lord Jeffrey exclaimed, "I'm proud of my country!—there is not another country upon earth where such a deed could be done!"

Lord Jeffrey, it might be said, was predisposed to think well of the men who acted in this way. He had maintained their cause on the bench. There were others, however, for whom the lesson was not so palatable, but who needed it more; and they, we may hope, were permanently benefited. To that class belonged a well-known minister of the time, who, in

a pamphlet written to persuade the Government to stand firm, "ventured to assert, from pretty accurate information, that less than one hundred will cover the whole secession;" and who, after thinking over the whole matter again, came to a more discouraging conclusion—" *I am not satisfied that any will secede.*" The meaning of that, of course, was that in the opinion of this writer it was in the highest degree doubtful whether any minister in the Church of Scotland would be found so faithful to his convictions on the day of trial as to be ready to make sacrifices for their sake. Looking at the matter from this point of view, it is not necessary to think of the merits of the controversy. What we want to note first of all is that the exodus which took place from the Establishment in 1843 was in itself an evidence of the power of conscience, and was fitted to convey to the unbelieving world itself an impression of the reality of religion.*

In the impression which the event was thus calculated to produce we find so far an explanation of the fact that the year in which it occurred became conspicuously "a year of grace." The surrender by so many good men of their earthly all, professedly for Christ's sake, was a moral miracle; and like all

* Mr. Mather of Stanley tells of one of the ministers who had turned back on the day of trial, and who, when railing at the Free Church in the hearing of a United Secession elder, received this reply: "Mr. —, had all the Non-Intrusion ministers acted as you have done, a greater injury would have been done to the interests of religion and morality than could have been repaired by a hundred years' preaching."

miracles, it startled those who witnessed it, and arrested attention. That, as we all know, is one great point to gain in connection with spiritual work; and the universal testimony is that seldom has the ear of the Scottish people been more open to the Word than during the summer of the Disruption. Nor was it a mere ordinary willingness to listen that was awakened. It was natural that men should be heard with special respect who had just given very real evidence of the sincerity of the faith which they professed. Among the ministers who came out, for example, was the holder of the richest living in the Establishment; and when he preached the gospel afterwards, it is not wonderful that his hearers were apt to forget that he was professionally called to do so, and rather remembered the circumstance that he had given recent practical proof of the depth and earnestness of his own beliefs.

But there were other things which contributed to make 1843 a time of revival.

It is a simple historical fact that at that date the living element in the Church of Scotland, to a large extent, left the Establishment. That many good men remained is heartily conceded, and it is likewise as readily allowed that that fragment of the Church which continued to retain its connection with the State has since then wonderfully rallied. But there is no denying that at the Disruption the men who formed the Free Church were, in the main, just those

who had previously done most for the promotion of evangelical religion at home and abroad. One proof of that can never be forgotten. It stands out in unmistakable significance. *All the missionaries of the Church, to Jew and Gentile, without a single exception, cast in their lot with those who went out.* Scarcely less significant, however, was this other circumstance, that all those ministers likewise went out, equally without exception, in connection with whose labours the revival of 1839-40 had taken place. M'Cheyne died just before the final catastrophe, but there is no question about what he would have done had he lived; and as to all the survivors who were of one mind with him — Burns, the Bonars, Milne, Macdonald, Moody-Stuart, etc., in the Lowlands; and the Apostle of the North, Mackintosh, Campbell, etc., in the Highlands—every one of them joined the remarkable procession which, with Chalmers at its head, created on the 18th of May so great a sensation in the streets of Edinburgh.

This last fact, we may say in passing, is a somewhat suggestive one, bringing out as it does the difference between the intense Evangelicals of the two Churches of England and Scotland. In England the Evangelical has usually been indifferent to questions of Church polity. Content with being left to cultivate his own corner of the vineyard in peace, to preach the gospel without interference, he has troubled himself very little about the Erastian constitution of the

Establishment whose shelter he enjoyed. Our most earnest Scottish Evangelicals, on the contrary, have never been able to shut themselves up in this way with their own private interests.

Dr. Horatius Bonar, for instance, speaking of one of the latter (Mr. Milne of Perth), says: "In the movements of the 'Ten Years' Conflict' he took no lukewarm part, though by no means an ecclesiastic in the common sense of the word.....Those who counted upon his laxity in regard to Church principles, and who were persuaded that a man so spiritual and so silent in Church courts would take no part in the struggles of these years, were surprised at the resolute decision which he showed in adopting, and the energy in maintaining, the great ecclesiastical principles then battled for.....The ecclesiastical turmoil seemed to elevate, not to depress—to spiritualize, not to secularize. All the brethren whom he loved, and in whose fellowship he delighted, were of one mind on the questions which were dividing the Church courts. Hence they could meet together, confer together, pray together. All were of one heart and of one soul."

That, however, is by the way. Our present object is simply to bring this out, that among the forces which came directly under the spiritual influences of the period, and which were baptized into the spirit of self-sacrifice that characterized the Disruption, was the very force which had, before 1843, been doing most for the evangelization of the country. And if

the wave told even upon the general population in making it more ready to hear, it may well be imagined that *they* must have experienced a still more powerful impulse who were themselves in the very bosom of it.

But here we do not require to guess or speculate. The evidence is abundant that ministers and others received in those days a manifest blessing, and were enabled to preach and speak with a new interest and power. "I am conscious," says one who passed through the trial of sacrificing his living for Christ's sake,—“I am conscious, speaking generally, of more liberty and freedom both in prayer and preaching.” It was a common experience. Such fidelity to conscience, such loyalty to the Head of the Church, could not but be followed by enlargement of heart and fervour of spirit. The number cannot be great now of those who retain very distinct recollections of the Disruption summer, but most of us probably have heard men speak of it. It was a summer of peculiar beauty. Scarcely any rain fell to interrupt the numerous open-air services that required to be held. The outed congregations often met under unfavourable outward circumstances—in barns, sheds, or haylofts; in disused quarries, on the roadside, or on the sea-shore;—but there was a charm in these assemblages which later times have not retained. The ministers, amid all their privations,—and these, it is well known, were in many cases serious,—were not depressed. On the contrary, there was a lightsomeness, almost an

exultation, about them which gave a certain elasticity to their services; and this, with the unconventional character of their surroundings, imparted a freshness and interest and effectiveness to their preaching which had never been observed before.

One of the most accomplished of the young ministers who came out was Mr. Grant of Ayr. He was settled in Wallacetown only a month or two before the Disruption; but he had fully made up his mind beforehand as to what it would be his duty to do in the event of a disruption, and so it came about that on him and a few others was laid in 1843 the heavy charge of providing ordinances for the many Free Church congregations which sprang up in that year within the bounds of his Presbytery. What the nature of that work was, and how it was performed, is told by himself in the following interesting terms. His account may be accepted as a sample of what was taking place at the time all over the country.

“The months that followed the Disruption were busy months,” says he. “The eleven who came out undertook to supply ordinances in thirty-three charges. It was no easy task. I find that I preached on an average twenty times a month. My brethren were equally busy. But two things combined to make it very pleasant work. First, there was little rain—Sabbath seemed invariably to be calm and sunshiny—so that our meeting in the open air was really more pleasant than it would have been in a crowded church;

secondly, *the earnestness with which the people listened was remarkable.* I have now lived to see the revival of 1859, and the religious movement of 1874. I cannot and therefore do not speak of other localities, but I may safely say that in Ayr the earnestness was deeper and the fruit more abundant in the summer and autumn of 1843 than during any other part of my ministry. It was not merely nor mainly a time of ecclesiastical controversy about Church government, but especially a time of deep, earnest, and widespread spiritual awakening. As I gazed on the upturned countenances of the assembled people they always seemed to me to say, '*Sir, we would see Jesus.*'" *

Mr. Grant speaks of the abundant fruit that was gathered at this period. Others are named in the admirable "Annals of the Disruption" as giving similar testimony. Dr. Lorimer says that many of the young people in his congregation who applied for admission to the Lord's table in 1844 "attributed their first serious thoughts of religion to the great event of the Disruption, and its immediate consequent widespread and warm gospel preaching." "My labours," writes Dr. Taylor of Flisk, "lay among the farmers and ploughmen and villagers. Amongst these God's saving grace was effectually put forth in the Disruption year, and in some of the years that immediately followed. It is true that things did not

* "Annals of the Disruption," p. 204. Edinburgh: Macniven and Wallace.

turn out as I expected and prayed for. My hope was that there would be some marked and outwardly recognizable work of grace, some visible acknowledgment from God of what, as a Church, we were endeavouring to do to his glory. It was not so; and doubtless this expectation was my infirmity. The great scriptural principle was literally fulfilled—the kingdom of God cometh not with observation. There was a measure of hearty interest among the people and hopefulness in connection with ordinances which was encouraging; *but it was years afterwards before I knew of cases of conversion which had really taken place at that time.* I remember well the first intimation I got. A poor ploughman, of simple mind and manner, called for his certificate. He had been with us at the Disruption, and had worshipped with us in the barn. He was affected at parting, and he said, with much feeling, ‘Sir, the Word gripped me in the barn.’ One and another of the most decided of the people have spoken to that as the time when they were affected by spiritual things as they had never been before.”

“The visible acknowledgment from God” which Dr. Taylor had hoped for, but which was denied to him, was actually given elsewhere. In the spring and summer of 1843 a very remarkable awakening occurred in Skye in connection with the labours of the Rev. Roderick M’Leod of Snizort, one of the outgoing ministers, and a man held in such high esteem

that he was subsequently called to fill the Chair of the Free Church General Assembly. "One Wednesday," we read in the "Annals," "he preached from the words, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock.' On this occasion the presence of the Spirit of God was manifested in great power. Mr. McLeod was using the words, 'Oh, it is not my fear that Christ will not accept you, but my fear is that you will not accept of Christ!' when the cries of the people were such that his voice was drowned, and he had to stop speaking. Some, after that solemn sermon, refused to move from the place. When their friends offered to take them they would cry, 'Oh, will I go away without Christ! will I go home without Christ!'. The power which on many occasions about this time attended the preaching of the word at Fairybridge was overwhelming."

"The year of the Disruption," says Mr. Brown, the compiler of the "Annals," "proved to be a great time of evangelistic effort in all parts of the land, and the Word of God had free course to the awakening of sinners and quickening of believers. In some localities the work was more quiet, in others its results were more openly manifest, but everywhere there was reason to believe that God, in no common measure, was giving testimony to the Word of his grace, and owning his servants, in bringing sinners to Christ and building up his people in their most holy faith."

In a word, there took place in 1843 exactly what

was to have been expected. Those who fought in the conflict for what they believed to be the honour of Christ, received a measure of blessing before the Disruption; and now a greater blessing came upon them in connection with their sufferings and sacrifices for the same end. Again, the great law of the kingdom was illustrated, "*The Holy Ghost was given because Jesus was glorified.*" That the glorification of Christ was the chief aim of the demonstration of the 18th of May is certain. The whole thing may have been a delusion, and impure motives may have mingled at many points with the springs of the movement; but that man is incapable of recognizing truth and sincerity when he sees them who does not feel that the outgoing ministers believed in their heart of hearts that they were suffering for Christ's sake. And we may be sure of this, that Christ saw the honesty of their intentions, and accepted the sacrifice.

"What has been to me," says Dr. Taylor, "a source of constant satisfaction is that we did not provoke Christ to blast our ministry by a deliberate disowning of him in his kingly office. Probably there was no feeling which more effectually constrained me to join in the Disruption movement than just the fear that Christ would refuse to remember me among his servants should I have followed any other course."

On various accounts we may say that the Disruption of the Church of Scotland was a great misfortune. But looking at it in the light of spiritual religion it

very manifestly brought substantial compensations. It was attended, there cannot be a doubt, with an outpouring of the Spirit. It imparted fresh life and energy to the evangelistic forces which had begun to gather strength in the land. And by throwing down those barriers of law or etiquette which had shut in the parishes where Moderatism reigned, it opened the whole country to the preaching of the gospel. In the whole history of Scotland there is no revival era to be compared in intensity and extent to that of 1843.

CHAPTER IV.

CROSS CURRENTS.

Edward Irving—Rowism—Bishop Ewing's extraordinary statement—Scottish Episcopacy—Broad Church view of the Atonement—Dr. Norman Macleod—Dr. James Morison—Finney—Revivals among Nonconformists—Condemnation of Morison—Atonement controversy in United Secession Church—Evangelical Union—Dr. John Brown—Effect on Scottish theology.

THE main stream of religious life in Scotland has, ever since the Reformation, been distinctively evangelical—evangelical after the Calvinistic type. There have been times when the currents, all over the country, appeared to run in a contrary direction. But then the Church was not itself. The stream stagnated and became putrescent. No sooner did the life return than the original channel was regained.

It was not always, however, by what is historically known as "Moderatism" that the free flow of the main stream was disturbed. Once and again movements have sprung up which could by no means be called non-evangelical, yet which were far from being in harmony with the national faith as represented by the accepted standards.

Not very much came out of the teaching of Edward Irving so far as Scotland is concerned. There remain among us one or two congregations (not so many apparently as to be reckoned worth mentioning in the Almanac) which owe their origin more or less directly to his inspiration, and it is probable that scattered here and there among people who are at once cultured and visionary there are a few isolated individuals who would call themselves his disciples. But he has left little visible impression on the country, and except that his views of the human nature of Christ have percolated through society, and find acceptance in circles which are much more literary than theological, his permanent influence on our religious life would not be worth calculating.

It is different, however, with Campbell of Row—better known in after life as Dr. McLeod Campbell—who was associated with Irving in the beginning of his career, and shared his fate as a heretic; but who lived to be rehabilitated by the Established Church after the Disruption, and to take a leading place in a movement the precise value of which has yet to be estimated.

The following extraordinary statement appears in the *Life of Bishop Ewing*.^{*} Dean Stanley had just delivered his lectures on Scottish Church History in Edinburgh. It was not the opinion of Presbyterians

^{*} “*Memoir of Alexander Ewing, D.C.L., Bishop of Argyle and the Isles*,” p. 566. London: Daldy, Isbister, and Co.

in general that the dean showed on that occasion "a marvellous acquaintance with Scotch facts and their bearings;" but the bishop thought that he did, and complimented him accordingly. The lecturer, however, had been guilty of one oversight, and Dr. Ewing called his attention to it.

"I could mention, if you would excuse me, that you have omitted an act which, if injurious and discreditable to the Establishment, is yet the hinge on which most of its recent history turns—the deposition of Dr. Campbell. To that is mainly owing the influx into the Episcopal Church of a valuable portion of the Establishment; and their desertion so weakened the latter that at the Disruption the Calvinistic party carried the day."

The closing clause in the sentence is sufficient to show that the bishop knew very little about the Disruption. His statement is, in fact, nonsense, and his biographer, Dr. Ross, who was himself to begin with a Presbyterian and Free Churchman, would have acted wisely in suppressing it. The Disruption did not turn upon questions in theology, but upon questions of administration; and on the points of non-intrusion and spiritual independence Irving and Campbell would have been at one with Chalmers. But as to the assertion preceding this reference, the Bishop of Argyle and the Isles may be accepted as a competent witness, and this is what he says—that, *as the result of Campbell's deposition, such an influx*

took place into the Scottish Episcopal Church as seriously to affect the balance of parties in the Establishment.

If that is a fact, it is an interesting and important one, because it enables us to trace the course of the cross current which appeared half a century ago in the west of Scotland. So far as appearances go—so far as those outside can judge of the prevailing drift in a communion which has no popular assemblies in which its mind can be expressed—we should have said that the strongest tendencies in the Scottish Episcopal Church were toward sacerdotalism. There is a very palpable strain of that even in the *quasi* liberal Charges of Bishop Wordsworth; and the very advanced ritual which is tolerated in some of the churches, taken in connection with the marked disposition which has of late been displayed to keep aloof from Presbyterian contact, indicates, one would say, with sufficient significance that High Churchism is not the least influential of the forces that control this body. But Bishop Ewing must have known the condition of his own Church, and he would not have written to Dean Stanley as he did, if he had not been certain that there were many in it like himself. Mr. Erskine of Linlathen was one; and that few of the school in Scotland have become publicly known is probably due less to their being a numerically small party than to their aversion to tie themselves down to any particular forms of doctrine.

Bishop Ewing made no secret of the fact that he himself was a disciple of Campbell. "No one," he wrote, "owed more to his theology than I did, though many have turned it to better account. His works and those of my first teacher, Mr. Erskine, form a double star which has lightened an otherwise dark and dreary night."

What the bishop was personally his biography shows. He was not in the least like a traditional "Moderate." Religion was to him a great reality. He had a profound love for Jesus Christ. And in his journals and letters there constantly appear utterances which could only come from a devout and earnest and spiritually-exercised mind.

But he was an Evangelical of a type altogether different from that with which the religious history of the country makes us most familiar; and this will appear at once if we quote his view (which is Campbell's also) of the atonement.

"We must discover," says he, "what is the fittest language in which to declare to the nineteenth century what St. Paul proclaimed in the first—that the Son of God came among us to reveal the way by which alone we can return to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God, and thus *be saved*—that is, have the saving health of God flowing through all our thoughts and words and acts. Surely we have the secret of this salvation, security for the uprising of our hearts into a newness of affectionate and

adoring life, in the word: 'Herein was love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son that we might live through him.' The outward sufferings of Christ were, so to speak, the accidents of his mission. They were the results of the contradictions of sinners against himself—things which he encountered and endured and triumphed over in his love for us, to awaken within us the resolve, 'I will arise, and go to my Father;' but they are no more to be looked on as *penal* than were the sufferings of all that goodly fellowship of the prophets who prepared his way."

The language here used is perfectly plain and intelligible. "The outward sufferings of Christ"—his sufferings on the cross—were the mere "*accidents of his mission.*" There was nothing "*penal*" about them; nothing to distinguish them in their essential nature from those of the martyrs; and their sole design was to promote the uprising in the heart of new affections.

Dr. Norman Macleod, who also claimed Campbell as his master, refused to go this length. Speaking of a work on a like subject by another author, he writes:—"I think Young's view of sacrifice superficial in the extreme, and that *in his desire to give prominence to personal righteousness as the grand end of Christ's work, in which I cordially sympathize, he leaves really no room for pardon as an act of mercy.*"* The objection is a fatal one to such theories

* "Memoir of Norman Macleod, D.D.," vol. ii., p. 256.

as Bishop Ewing's. A doctrine of the atonement which does not take account of the sense of guilt as well as the sense of sinfulness, can never meet the deepest needs of men; and even if that difficulty could be got over, one feels that on a subject so mysterious nothing can be much worth listening to which is, on the face of it, of the nature of a mere speculation. Dr. Norman Macleod admits, in regard to the work of his namesake, that "*it has defects when brought to the severe test of exegesis.*" But that is a very severe thing to say; for the criticism amounts to this, that Dr. McLeod Campbell can be shown to go beyond the record. Such in any case can be said of Bishop Ewing's expositions. They are not based on a fair and intelligent interpretation of Scripture, and in so far as they are spun out of his own brain they will be reckoned of more or less value just as readers are disposed or the contrary to take the law at his lips.

It is not, however, our business here to argue out theological questions. We have been seeking to follow one of the cross currents which was produced by the awakening of religious inquiry in the early part of the half century, and we have directed attention to this, that if one who ought to be a competent witness is to be relied on, Rowism in at least its doctrinal aspect found a home under Scottish Episcopacy.

But, as has been already indicated, it found other outlets elsewhere. Dr. Norman Macleod openly pro-

claimed himself to be a disciple of his namesake, and we make a very modest assumption when we say that Dr. Norman in turn had his followers. There is good reason to believe that at this moment the influence of Rowism is felt in some of our Scottish pulpits, and that the "cross current" is to be traced in the vague views of the atonement which one frequently meets with in newspapers, and among the class of religious laymen whose knowledge of theology has been derived from general literature.

A very different man from Bishop Ewing was Dr. James Morison, now so well known as an expositor of Scripture. The son of a Secession minister, he was licensed to preach in 1839. In his first efforts, although his ability was recognized, he made little or no impression on his hearers. But a remarkable change came over the character of his ministrations while he was taking charge of a small station on the borders of Banffshire; and from that time he became the leader in a movement which issued, by-and-by, in the formation of a new denomination.

It will be remembered that 1839 was one of our revival eras. From the prominence given to the labours of Burns and M'Cheyne and others, it has been too generally assumed that the quickening was confined to the Established Church. But that was not the case. The swell of the movement was felt more or less by all the non-conforming bodies, and

one of the fruits of the awakening was young Morison. He is described as setting out for the station in which the change referred to took place, carrying with him for reading by the way "Finney's Lectures on Revivals," and as having at the time a deepening conviction that there was something amiss in his style of preaching.* What befell him was afterwards described by himself in his defence before his Presbytery. "For many years," he said, "he had laboured under total darkness as to the way of salvation. By patient research and study he at last found a truth in the Bible which had the effect of introducing him all at once into a new world. It changed all his views, all his feelings, all his desires, all his conduct. This gracious and glorious truth which he had discovered in the Bible was nothing else than the love of God to him in particular, in giving his own dear Son to die for him. This Bible truth he saw clearly stated in many portions of Scripture ; and having seen it, and wondering that he had never seen it before, he burned with intense desire to make it known to others, that they also might receive the same unspeakable peace and joy which it had imparted to his own soul. Animated by this desire, he began to preach it everywhere ; and he had no sooner begun to preach it than he saw sinners finding peace in believing it, and deriving from it a motive to live entirely to God."

* "A History of the Evangelical Union." By Fergus Ferguson, D.D. Page 7. Glasgow : T. D. Morison, 1876.

How the young preacher should have concluded from his experience that he had got hold of a great and neglected truth ; how he should have proceeded to preach it with a force and a fervour corresponding to the depth and freshness of his convictions ; and how, wherever he went, people were impressed and moved by his enthusiasm, is what we can all easily understand.

It was the same with John Henry Newman, who tells that, when what he called the light flashed into his mind, the exulting confidence with which he entered on the task of reviving medievalism imparted a visible change even to his outward appearance. "My health and strength," says he, "came back to me with such a rebound that some friends at Oxford, on seeing me, did not well know that it was I, and hesitated before they spoke to me."

That the reception of a new idea has marked the beginning of an epoch in a man's mental history is no proof in itself that the idea is a true one ; and we are not surprised that in the Church to which he belonged Mr. Morison's teaching was regarded with intense disfavour. At the same time it will always be found that where masses of people are moved to repentance under a particular kind of preaching, some needed truth must have been presented ; and in accounting for the spiritual awakenings which did undoubtedly take place about this time in connection with Mr. Morison's ministrations, we have no difficulty in trac-

ing these in great part to his free proclamation of the love of God and of the grace of the gospel. It was a time when many were prepared to listen; there was a stirring among the dry bones; and when a sense of guilt is awakened in a soul, it is apt to think only of the open door, without concerning itself much about the principle on which the door has been thrown open. What really told in producing permanent spiritual effects was something that was common alike to Morison and M'Cheyne.

Mr. Morison did not become all at once a full-fledged Arminian. His theology grew. The first idea he got hold of was that Christ died in the same sense for all men; and this he preached as his gospel, asserting that all those who believe that Christ has died for them will certainly be saved. For a number of years after this he adhered to a doctrine of election which he called one of the most delightful doctrines of Scripture—albeit the view he took of it was not very high. According to his teaching till 1843, “election in the order of nature comes after the atonement.....God foresaw that not one of the whole human family would be willing to be saved [through the atonement], and then he elected.” This doctrine, however, necessitated his continued acceptance of the Calvinistic idea of “effectual calling” by the Spirit, and by-and-by he parted still further from the Westminster Confession, and taught that election is not a thing of eternity but of time; not an absolute

decree, but a selecting process ; not an election *to* faith, but an election *through* faith. These views naturally led to a new estimate of human ability. Original sin was not denied ; nor was it asserted that any man has the power, apart from grace, to save himself. But under the economy of the gospel, circumstances have so changed that salvation is literally within the reach of all who choose to use the ability they now possess. " When the atonement has been made, and the Holy Spirit has not only embodied the record of it in the inspired gospel, but is himself present to persuade and guide the sinner to the faith of it, the sinner is able to surrender himself to this divine influence and believe and be saved."*

The ordination of Mr. Morison as minister of a Secession church in Kilmarnock was not carried through without difficulty ; but his preaching was extremely popular, and his meeting-house was soon crowded. This led of course to public attention being all the more quickly called to his doctrine ; and within six or seven months of his settlement, which took place in September 1840, he was summoned to answer for himself at the bar of his Presbytery. There, by a majority of twenty to five, he was declared to have been proved guilty of teaching error, and was suspended from the ministry. Against this decision he appealed to the Synod, but without effect. The judg-

* " Doctrinal Declaration." Issued by the Evangelical Union Commission. Glasgow, 1881.

ment of the court below was affirmed, and on the 12th of June 1841, Mr. Morison was declared to be no longer connected with the Secession Church, and all the ministers of that Church were prohibited from holding official communion with him.

From that date we trace the rise of a body which still exists, and has attained to considerable dimensions—the Evangelical Union. Popularly, and for many years, the members of that Church were called Morisonians. That nickname has been dropped; but the influence of the founder of the sect still continues, and whatever may be thought about his theology, James Morison must always be regarded as one of the religious forces of the last half-century. Other ministers from his own Mother Church subsequently joined him; their number was swelled by additions from among the Congregationalists; as time went on a theological seminary was founded, of which Morison became the principal, and students were educated for the ministry; and so by slow degrees an Arminian communion was established in Calvinistic Scotland. But this was not all that resulted from this movement. Although the Secession Synod was unanimous in expelling Morison, there were some prominent members of it who agreed to the verdict with reluctance. Among those was Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh, who, in connection with the case, spoke in a way to awaken suspicions of his own orthodoxy. The result was an internal controversy on the subject of

the atonement which seriously disturbed for a time the whole denomination. Ultimately peace was restored, but, if we may accept the testimony of Dr. Cairns, not without a permanent impression being left on the theological sentiment of the country.

“Upon the whole,” says Dr. Cairns,* “it may be affirmed that the controversy, though confined, with the exception of the Scottish Congregationalists, to the United Secession Church, has, by its remote as well as its direct impression, exerted a valuable influence in liberalizing the tone of Scottish theology, while it has done nothing to derange its equilibrium or remove its landmarks.”

Morison’s view of the atonement was in one respect as different as possible from Bishop Ewing’s. The bishop held the sufferings of Christ to be in no sense penal. The Evangelical Union doctrine is the very opposite of that. “We believe the Saviour’s ‘obedience unto death’ to have been strictly vicarious and substitutionary, and to have constituted a propitiation or sacrificial satisfaction for the sins of men.”

At the same time extremes met in the case of the two men. Both taught that in consequence of something or other done by Christ for the whole world, all men are safe if they will only believe it—thus making the object of saving faith in each case an assertion as to matters of fact which many hold to be on good grounds disputable.

* “Memoir of John Brown, D.D.,” p. 255.

Dr. Ferguson, in his "History of the Evangelical Union," connects the awakening of a new life in the mind of Morison with his perusal of "Finney's Lectures on Revivals." That the connection was real we do not doubt; more real than another which the same author tries to establish* between the rise of "Morisonianism" and the labours of M'Cheyne. It was natural, therefore, that Finney, when he came to Scotland in 1859, should find his way into the society of those who regarded Morison as their religious leader. It is curious, however, to find that the American revivalist, broad as his evangelicalism was, was not so much at home in this communion as he expected.

"This Evangelical Union," he writes,† "had grown out of a revival in Scotland at the time of the first publication of my Revival Lectures.....Mr. Kirk represented my views as identical with the views of their Church. But on some points I found that I very considerably differed from them. Their views of faith as a mere intellectual state I could not receive. They explained away, in a manner to me unintelligible, the doctrine of election. However, Mr. Kirk insisted that he entirely accepted my views as he heard me preach them, and that they were the views of the Evangelical Union Church. Thus, without intending it, he shut the doors of other pulpits against me."

* "Evangelical Repository."

† "Charles G. Finney: an Autobiography." London: Hodder and Stoughton. Pages 381, 382.

Mr. Finney's perplexity and dissatisfaction suggest the hope that some of the differences which appear between this body and the orthodox communions around it may be to some extent verbal. The body itself is no longer so completely isolated as it was. Dr. Morison's Commentaries are welcomed to the libraries of all theologians. And although it sounds to us, to say the least of it, a bald gospel to tell a man that Christ died for all, and therefore for him, and that he will be saved if he accepts the fact, we know enough to be certain that practically as much stress is laid in this denomination as in others on personal dealing with the Saviour and the necessity of the work of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER V.

A NEW AWAKENING (1859-60).

Revivals in America and Ireland—The wave reaches Scotland—The Glasgow Wynds—Robert Cunningham—Dumfriesshire—Dr. Julius Wood—Features of the period—Brownlow North—A new order—Lay evangelists.

IN 1858 a remarkable revival of religion took place in the United States of America. The movement seemed to stir the whole country. It was said at the time that “a traveller might go for three thousand miles, and stop where he would, in town or country, there was no place where he might not turn aside and go into a prayer-meeting.” Above two thousand cities, towns, and villages were reported to have been visited by the blessing; and the fruit gathered into the Churches was proportionally great. The Old School Presbyterians alone added to their communion that year more than twenty thousand members—a larger accession than they had received in any one season for a generation before.

Tidings of this awakening were brought of course to this country, and as its dimensions and wonderful

character came to be more and more fully known and realized, the interest in it deepened, until among earnest people everywhere a passionate desire arose that the Churches on this side of the Atlantic might experience a similar quickening. The result was that prayer was multiplied, that ministers became more fervid in their preaching, and that the interest in religion generally grew to be much more intense. And by-and-by the cloud of blessing broke over our islands also.

The shower fell first upon Ireland, which enjoyed in 1859 truly "a year of grace." It is not a little touching, at this time of day, to read Professor Gibson's summing up of the results which he says followed the good work described by him.* "Now," says he, "through this great revival Ireland has been lifted up to the gaze of universal Christendom. Visitors from many lands—from Continental Europe, Asia, and America—have come to admire the wonderful work which has been produced among her people; and the spiritual change produced through her northern province has given a new impulse to the cause of truth and righteousness, even to the ends of the earth." Ten thousand six hundred and thirty-six communicants were, during this harvest season, added to the membership of the Presbyterian Church in Ulster; and the commissioner whom the *Times* sent

* "A History of the Ulster Revival." By the Rev. W. Gibson, Professor of Christian Ethics, and Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot. 1860.

to make inquiry on the spot (recognizing in this way the notoriety and significance of the events which were taking place) could not help acknowledging that, however the phenomena were to be explained, changes of a most remarkable and beneficent kind had been effected in the country.

What was being experienced in Ireland naturally increased the anxiety of the good people in Scotland. Many of them went across the Channel to see the work for themselves, and returned with their hearts on fire. Prayer became more importunate. The means of grace were plied with increased diligence. And at last the blessing came; not to the same extent as in Ulster and America, but in a manner which made it certain that the movement which followed was the result of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Glasgow appears to have been the place in which there were the earliest manifestations of a quickened interest in religion, and we can have no hesitation in connecting those manifestations with the memorable work in the Wynds. That work owed its origin to the efforts made by Dr. Robert Buchanan to evangelize the waste places of his own parish. At first these efforts were purely local, no more being contemplated in them than the support of a congregational home mission. But as the character and extent of the field came to be better known, Dr. Buchanan's ideas expanded, and in January 1850 he delivered a public

lecture, under the presidency of the then Lord Provost, in which he showed that the barbarism of the Wynds was already threatening the peace and well-being of the more orderly districts of the city.* His main object in that lecture was to move the municipal authorities to look after the education of the people; but the conviction grew upon him that the field he had entered was one for the reclamation of which the whole energy of the Church was required, and accordingly we find him, in the beginning of 1851, bringing the matter first under the notice of the Presbytery, and then, in the May following, seeking to secure the co-operation of the General Assembly. The response which he met with was on the whole encouraging. A new building society was formed, by whose help places of worship were erected in various localities; and a work was thus begun on which a manifest blessing has rested, and which has done so much for Glasgow that one thinks with a sort of dismay of what might have happened if it had never been attempted.

In 1854 the Wynd Church proper was opened, and Mr. D. Maccoll ordained as its minister. In four years it was filled, and a new church—an overflow church, as one might call it—was erected in the Bridgegate. To this Mr. Maccoll moved with his congregation, and the original building was then occu-

* "Robert Buchanan, D.D. An Ecclesiastical Biography." By Rev. Norman L. Walker. Edinburgh: T. Nelson and Sons.

pied by Mr. Howie. Again the church filled, and Mr. Howie migrated with his people to Trinity. After him came Mr. Wells; and he too, having gathered a third congregation, was transferred to the Barony. Lastly, a fourth congregation was collected by Mr. Riddell; and both were in course of time moved to Augustine. Trinity, Barony, and Augustine were each built to hold eleven hundred sitters.

It would be difficult to point to a more remarkable record than that in the modern history of the Church. That it prospered as it did was due to the fact that God put his seal in a very conspicuous way upon the undertaking. A blessing attended Mr. Maccoll's ministry from the first. Long before the wave of spiritual life from across the Atlantic reached our shores, drops from heaven fell upon the city desert in which he laboured; and when at last the tide came, there was no part of the country in which its influence was sooner or more powerfully felt. There was another explanation of the extraordinary success which attended the ministrations of the men we have named. They were all preachers of the "revival" type, men who had the strongest belief in the power of the gospel, when accompanied by the Spirit, to convert sinners; and, in point of fact, so great was the harvest which those of them who were earliest in the field were permitted to gather, that a special periodical was established to report the results. For many months together a weekly serial, entitled *The Wynd*

Journal, edited by Mr. M'Coll, informed all interested of what God was doing in a region toward which, in 1850, the citizens of Glasgow were directed to look with apprehension.

Very many still living date their conversion from "the revival in the Wynds." Many more, probably, who were then awakened have been gathered to their rest. Among the latter was a remarkable man, who afterwards became famous as an evangelist—*Robert Cunningham*. He was forty-six in 1859. He could not read then, and had so little acquaintance with churches that he had never seen the Lord's table spread. Moreover, his character was of the worst. A butcher to his trade, his favourite place of recreation was the prize-ring, in which his size and skill gained him honours as a pugilist. This man, after his conversion, developed a wonderful gift of natural eloquence, and thus became the means of awakening to concern not a few others like himself. "Wherever he went he had," says Mr. Macpherson, "but one text, one theme—'I am a monument of grace,' corresponding to Paul's 'By the grace of God, I am what I am.' It was the story of his conversion; and though told a thousand times, the recital never grew stale nor lost any of its freshness and power. Many scores of thousands up and down our country listened with profound interest and with tears to the testimony borne to Jesus and his Spirit by this untutored child of grace. At Huntly, for instance, we have seen an assemblage of

ten thousand, including persons of rank and culture, men of all the learned professions in great numbers, officers of the army and navy, and many of every class, melted to tears under the simple heart utterances of one who had learned to love much because he had been forgiven much.”*

The spiritual movement of this time, however, was not confined to Glasgow, although it was in the Wynds that its first and perhaps its most remarkable manifestations appeared. The country was far better prepared for a visitation of the Spirit now than it had been in 1839, and there was a far more general expectation of blessing. All the Churches were more or less quickened, and hardly any part of the country remained entirely unmoved. In the north and south of Scotland especially very marked awakenings occurred, and everywhere there was manifested a greater readiness to hear than had been displayed since the memorable summer of 1843. Nor did the interest pass very quickly away. In some places the flood did not come for a long time after there had been heard the sound of abundance of rain. The following, for example, is an account given by Dr. Julius Wood of what he himself witnessed in the county of Dumfries. We give the narrative the more readily because it so exactly describes what, at the outset at least, was a common experience.

* “Revival and Revival Work.” By Rev. John Macpherson. London: Morgan and Scott.

“When the revival took place in America,” he says, “the attention of God’s people, both ministers and members of the Church, was fixed upon it with lively interest. When, subsequently, Ireland was made a partaker of the heavenly blessing, an interest still more intense was awakened. A number of ministers and members of the Churches visited Ireland. When they returned they told what they had seen and heard. Prayer-meetings became more numerous, and were largely attended ; news from America and Ireland were communicated at them. A deep and solemn interest and expectation were excited. Prayer was made to God that he would be pleased to pour out his Spirit on the towns and congregations of Dumfriesshire. And soon there began to be droppings, as the precursors of a common shower. That was in the end of 1859 and beginning of 1860—that is, twelve months before the blessing came.”

Dr. Wood then proceeds to tell how the first outburst took place. It was in Annan, and in connection with the preaching of Mr. Hammond, a young American who had come to Scotland as a student. The awakening, however, soon extended to Dumfries. And there “the largest church in the town was crowded in every part every evening, and other churches had to be opened to receive the multitude who eagerly came together to hear the word of life. A profound impression was made by these crowded meetings, not caused (humanly speaking) by anything that was said ;

for the truth was not put forward with great intellectual power or eloquence, or in the wisdom of man's words, but only stated pointedly with plainness and faithfulness. Many who came from curiosity, and who at first were rather offended at what they saw and heard, had their attention arrested, and were awakened to concern about their souls. The inquiry-meetings became crowded with persons whose very countenances indicated the trouble and anxiety within. Beyond all question there was a great work of the Holy Spirit. Many were convinced of sin, and after a longer or shorter period of distress and anxiety were enabled to believe in Jesus and find peace."*

Mr. Macpherson, who has made a study of our Scottish revivals, and who on that and other accounts is very competent to speak on the subject, specifies some features which he thinks were peculiarly distinctive of the awakening of 1859. "Assurance of personal salvation, for example," he says, "came then to be more widely regarded as the privilege of every Christian. It was held by a vastly increased number that it was neither unreasonable nor unscriptural that young believers should have as real joy and peace in believing as the ripest saints. And from this," he adds, "it followed that a much more general and happy tone of Christian thought and feeling was recognized as proper to the godly."

* "Sketch of the Remarkable Religious Awakening in the South of Scotland in the Spring of 1861." *News of the Churches* for 1861.

Whether that is true or not, there is another remark he makes to the correctness of which all will assent who have any recollection whatever of the period. It is this, that "the proper use and value of *lay agency* in carrying on the work of Christ were more fully acknowledged; and henceforth it became an article of common belief in the Churches that every Christian ought in some way to work. Out of the movement sprung a host of devoted workers, who, having in remembrance the happy days of their spiritual youth, laboured and prayed incessantly for another season of grace."

What Mr. Macpherson had specially in his mind when he wrote these words was without doubt the rise of what might almost be called a new order in the Scottish Church—that of the *lay evangelist*. A few representatives of the order had appeared before—notably Brownlow North, who was converted in 1854, and began to preach immediately—but it is a somewhat noticeable circumstance that it was in May 1859 (the revival year) that the order was first formally recognized by a General Assembly. On that occasion Mr. North's gifts were brought under the notice of the supreme court of the Free Church by a number of its best known men. A committee which was appointed to converse with him reported their high satisfaction with his doctrine and spirit; and thereafter, under the presidency of Principal Cunningham, the Assembly publicly extended to him the right

hand of fellowship, and he was sent forth with the *imprimatur* of the Church, not as a probationer, but formally as a lay evangelist.

Mr. Kenneth Moody-Stuart, in his interesting Life of this remarkable man,* makes a suggestive reference to the significant development implied in that transaction. During the struggle for the Church's liberties before 1843 there came to the front a number of laymen whose nobility of character and devotion to the honour of Christ contributed largely to secure for the cause with which they identified themselves the respect even of the world. "The band of Disruption elders," as Mr. Moody-Stuart says, "was indeed a distinguished one." It included such names as these—Alexander Dunlop, Graham Spiers, Earle Menteith, Claud Alexander of Ballochmyle, Hog of Newliston, Buchan of Kelloe, Thomson of Banchory, Christie of Durie, John Hamilton of Ninewar, John (afterwards Lord) Cowan, Mackgill Crichton of Rankeillor, etc. All of these men could speak, and did speak; but none of them, so far as we know, ever preached or addressed evangelistic meetings. It remained for the awakening of 1859-60 to produce a new development, and Mr. Moody-Stuart gives a long list of men who, after that time, took their part with the clergy in publicly inviting sinners to come to Christ. This band of "evangelizing elders" was not less distinguished than

* "Brownlow North, B.A., Oxon. Records and Recollections," p. 118. By the Rev. K. Moody-Stuart, M.A. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

the other, its members not belonging exclusively to any one branch of the Scottish Church. We have now become familiar with many of their names. Along with Brownlow North appeared Lords Polwarth, Kintore, and Cavan, Mr. Hay Macdowall Grant of Arndilly, Mr. Gordon of Parkhill, Sheriff Maitland-Heriot of Ramornie; and besides these, not a few of inferior social rank, yet of at least equal effectiveness as evangelists—like Robert Annan and Duncan Matheson.

We have spoken of the formation of a “new order,” but some may rather see in what occurred in 1859 the revival of an order which existed in apostolic times and in the Church of the Reformation. Anyhow, a new emphasis was then given to the obligation which lies upon all who have heard for themselves to invite others to come to a Saviour; and thus, there can be no doubt, the evangelistic force in the country has undergone a great practical expansion.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHURCHES.

A centripetal tendency—The exception of 1843—United Secession and Relief—Free and United Presbyterian Churches—Established Church efforts at readjustment—Original Seceders and Reformed Presbyterians—Biblical and theological inquiry—The Free Church—Robertson Smith case—The Macrae case—The “Scotch Sermons.”

OUR aim here is not to write the ecclesiastical history of the half century, but simply to indicate some of the things which have affected the religious life of the period. And it is solely in view of that purpose that we devote a chapter to a brief review of the experiences of the Churches as such.

One of the features of the time has been a more or less anxious desire to heal the breaches which from time to time have been made in the Reformation Church. In 1843 what looked like a decidedly contrary current prevailed, and caused a new division. But we may safely say that those who were mainly responsible for that breach have regretted it. The statesmen, on account of whose obstinacy the Disruption became inevitable, made the *amende* very heartily when it was too late,—Sir James Graham

and Lord Aberdeen confessing frankly to Dr. Buchanan that they had committed a grand mistake ; and although that fragment of the Church which remained in possession of the endowments was slower to acknowledge its error, it has since left the world in no doubt as to its later views by adopting the principles of the party it banished. Putting aside, then, what occurred in 1843 as a temporary aberration, we may repeat that during the half-century there has been manifested an intermittent but, in the long run, a steady tendency in the scattered branches of the Presbyterian family to get reconciled to one another. This tendency, with what it has led to, has told in various ways on the religion of the country.

The centripetal force appeared before the Disruption when the Old Light Burghers joined the Established Church. The body itself was too small to tell very materially on the larger denomination by which it was absorbed, but the union was regarded with interest as a testimony to the value of the reforming work in which the Evangelical party was engaged. When the Erskines left the Establishment they did not become Dissenters. All that they professed to do was to secede from the corrupt and intolerant majority which then dominated the Church courts ; and they indicated their willingness to return when things were made better. In course of time most of the Seceders became Voluntaries, and their return to any State Church was made impossible.

But the "Old Light" bodies still maintained their ancient faith, and one of the two saw their way to lower their protest when the party of Chalmers had gained the ascendancy in the Assembly. Though the stream thus received then was not large, it was acceptable on historical grounds, and the accession, doubtless, helped to swell the tide of the new life which was rising in the Establishment.

A more important event, however, was the union of the United Secession and Relief Churches in 1847, the result being the formation of the United Presbyterian Church. The two parts of this whole were, even in a state of separation, influential factors in the religious life of Scotland; but upon their combination their influence increased. There came naturally to be in the enlarged body a more sensible consciousness of strength, which led it to undertake greater things than it had before attempted. It at once took steps to make a better provision for its home ministry; it enlarged its foreign missions; it improved its organization in many different ways; and it has thoroughly established its reputation as one of the most vigorous ecclesiastical institutions in the country.

How far the union affected the general attitude of the new body is a question which it would be difficult to answer, but that it did in that way tell to some extent is distinctly declared by those who are most likely to know. Dr. Cairns, for example, tells us that "when the Articles of Union were being prepared,

Dr. Brown exerted himself to give the new association, which was to embrace more than five hundred congregations, the widest and most unsectarian character, and some peculiarities of the old Secession basis, to which he had always objected as too narrow, were dismissed ;” and Dr. Struthers, in his historical sketch of the rise of the Relief Church,* dwells with some emphasis on the denominational principles which he was carrying with him into the Church of which he was to become a minister. The Relief Church did not start by laying down an elaborate system of doctrines. What those sought who joined it first was simply relief from Patronage. Making thus no great point of anything but a love for the gospel, it developed naturally the practice of “free communion ;” and in coalescing with the United Secession Church, it no doubt carried with it a liberalizing element which has told upon the United Presbyterian denomination. It is said, also, that the Relief style of preaching was different from that of the Secession, being more florid and more regardful of literary form. Perhaps a *tertium quid* of superior excellence to both has been the result of the amalgamation.

In 1852, another breach was healed, though not so perfectly but that some splinters remained. The Old Light Anti-Burghers—better known by the name of the Original Secession—sought admission into the

* “United Presbyterian Fathers.” Edinburgh : A. Fullarton and Co. 1848.

Free Church, and were cordially welcomed. Lord Cockburn, noticing the event in his *Journal*, says:—“These Originals were small in number, but they were the pure stock of Ebenezer Erskine. They stuck to the old creed in favour of an Establishment, and only seceded because our Establishment had ceased to be what they held to be the Church of Scotland. They now, after a separation of about one hundred and fifteen years, returned to this Church, which they find in the Free.....The junction is received as a striking homage to the principles which the Establishment once owned.” The Rev. J. C. Johnston, in his admirable and valuable storehouse of historical *memorabilia*, says of the same incident: “The Free Church received [by the union] not a little Covenanting blood into its constitution when it added to its roll the names of Dr. Thomas Mc’Crie, Dr. Shaw of Whitburn, Mr. Paxton of Glasgow, Mr. White of Haddington, and others of the Covenant.”*

A still more important alliance than this, however, was proposed in 1863. Previously to that, the question had often been asked, Why the Free and United Presbyterian Churches should not become one. An obvious difficulty, of course, presented itself at the threshold—namely, that the two Churches were known to differ about the religious functions of the civil magistrate. But this difficulty had been seen

* “Treasury of the Scottish Covenant,” p. 217. By Rev. J. C. Johnston. Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot.

and made light of even in the Disruption Assembly. "I am the very last person," said Dr. Candlish, "who would stand on the rigid assertion of the mere theory of Establishments for the purpose of keeping up division or schism in the Church. So far from that, it appears to me that the distinct refusal of the states and kingdoms of this world to recognize the only principle on which we can consent to have the Church established, leaves to us a very great degree of practical liberty, and a large measure of practical discretion as to the terms on which we should stand with other Churches. Is the division and schism of the Christian Church to be kept up by a question as to the duty of another party over whom we have no control?" These words were twenty years old, and the sentiments contained in them had been received at the time they were spoken with unanimous applause. It did not seem likely, therefore, that trouble from that quarter would come now in 1863, when there appeared to be no chance at all of the Free Church ever being re-established. Nor indeed was there any trouble to begin with. Committees were appointed to confer on the subject, by the supreme courts of the two bodies, not only with unanimity, but with enthusiasm; and the negotiations commenced under the happiest auspices, their aim being to combine, not the United Presbyterian and Free Churches only, but the Reformed Presbyterian Church also.

But a breeze soon sprang up which increased by-

and-by to a storm, and after ten years' contending the idea of a union had to be given up to save the Free Church itself from shipwreck. It was surprising how quickly that Church seemed to settle down again to its direct work after the commotion, and how completely the private feuds it caused appeared to heal. Very serious damage was done, however, to the cause of religion in various ways by the controversy; and its marks will not be wholly effaced until the generation which engaged in it has entirely passed away.

At the same time, it would be very far from the truth to say that only evil came of the abortive attempt at union. In the process the Churches concerned went to school again, and got the benefit of what may truly be called a liberal education. The ideas of those who cared to think came to be cleared up upon many points; and in the "Articles of Agreement," accepted by all the parties with greater or less unanimity, there is stored up an elaborately prepared mass of material which will be turned to good account some day when the suspended negotiations shall be resumed.

In the meantime the Established Church had been looking interestedly on. It did not at first seem as if it had very much concern with the efforts which the non-conforming bodies of its neighbourhood were making to combine their forces, and it did not intermeddle, in a direct way at least, with the struggle. But when the fight proceeded, and a party appeared

in the Free Church which declared that it would rather break up that Church altogether than consent to the lowering of the Establishment flag, it saw, not unnaturally, its opportunity ; and in 1869 (six years, it will be observed, after the union negotiations had commenced) a deputation, headed by Dr. Norman Macleod, waited on the Government of the day *to ask the abolition of Patronage*. No secret was made of the motive which chiefly inspired the appeal. Dr. Macleod told Mr. Gladstone that there was no sacrifice he and his brethren would not make, and no legislation that they would not accept, to put an end to "the secession;" and when, in 1874 (the year after the negotiations were abandoned), Parliament conceded what was asked, it was on the distinct assumption that the claims of the Free Church would thereby be met, and its continued separation from the Establishment rendered inexcusable.

Here then, we may say, was another instance of the centripetal force that is working in our ecclesiastical world. The body which is in alliance with the State is equally with its non-conforming neighbours dissatisfied with the present state of things, and would be glad to see the breaches healed. But unfortunately its methods have not been very happy. Failing to recognize the fact that its readiness to accept the principles of those whom it had expelled from the Establishment involved virtually an acknowledgment that these parties had been wronged, it began its

union efforts on transparently selfish lines, seeking from the Government what it thought would break down the Free Church, not what might open the way for an honourable reconciliation. Two attempts made in this spirit having failed—the passing of the Patronage Act in 1874, and the submission of Mr. Finlay's Bill more recently—a course worthier of the circumstances was taken in 1887, when the General Assembly of the Free Church was asked to confer with its sister court on equal terms. But the proposal came too late. Events have satisfied the great majority of Free Churchmen that in any conference of Scottish Churches the question must be faced of whether the solution of our present perplexities may not be best found in disestablishment. The Established Church refused to entertain that question even for discussion, and hence the suspension of all negotiation for the present. But the progress already made forbids despair. In a year or two this difficulty also will be got over, and a new ecclesiastical readjustment may be made with mutual consent.

All these experiences, however, could not have been gone through by this Church without its religious condition being materially affected. Not to dwell upon anything else, it underwent a mighty change when its ministers came to be, not appointed by patrons, but elected by the people. This arrangement gave it a popular standing which it did not possess before, and largely explains the progress which it has

recently made. We cannot doubt, too, that the "candidating" which has been called forth has given greater liveliness to the preaching. While the efforts it has had to make to defend itself against attacks, and to assert what it believed to be its rights in the midst of the many who were disputing them, have imparted to it a conscious vigour which is inspiring it with a natural confidence.

With a word of reference to two other unions we must leave this subject. In 1876 the Reformed Presbyterians joined the Free Church. The event was one of no little interest and importance. This body was not a branch of "the secession." It represented those who, at the Revolution Settlement, refused to enter the new Establishment set up by William and Mary. They had a good deal to say for themselves. There are many now living who, if their lot had been cast in those days, would, with their present views, have stood by their side; not on the ground of their opposition to all Establishments, but on the ground of reasonable objections to the Establishment which was then formed. In any case, here was a stream which began an isolated and independent course nearly two hundred years ago, finding its way at last into what it recognized as the central current of the Church of Scotland. That such an accession would prove influential for good might have been anticipated, and the anticipation has been fully realized.

The other alliance is still in contemplation only—that between the Congregational and Evangelical Unions. What stands in the way of a consummation is that there exists in the latter body a difference of opinion as to Church government, some of its ministers and members being strong Presbyterians. It is possible that this difficulty may be got over, because, as a matter of fact, all are at this moment practically Independents. But if the combination is pressed, the result may be a break up of the Union, the majority joining the Congregationalists, the minority asking readmission into the Church out of which they were originally expelled, formerly the United Secession, now the United Presbyterian Church.

Other things besides efforts at mutual re-adjustment present themselves to our notice as we look back on the history of the Churches during the last half-century. All of them have felt the strain of the times in connection with Biblical and theological inquiry. It is not very surprising that the Free Church was the first to show itself sensible of the strength of the new currents. While it was strong in its desire to retain its traditional character as an Evangelical body, it was also keenly alive to the importance of providing a well-instructed ministry; and it is the simple fact that in no Church of its size is there so thorough an equipment made for the training of divinity students.

Very remarkable and generous testimony to that effect was borne lately, at the opening of Airedale College, by the Rev. Dr. Duff, Professor of Old Testament Theology. "Among Presbyterian schools," he said, "I may point you chiefly to the Free Church Colleges, which are by far the strongest, and are model schools in their way. Whenever in these schools a department requires a teacher, it is always possible to choose among several candidates who are masterly students, enthusiastic in devotion to the gospel, specialists in the particular department of study, and known and honoured by thoughtful men both at home and abroad. How is this condition of things obtained? Primarily by the quality of their three theological colleges in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen. They are taught by faculties of seven strictly theological teachers in Edinburgh, six in Glasgow, and four in Aberdeen, aided by large endowments for students' scholarships.....The lesson of the whole is that where thorough study is maintained there are never wanting abundant theological teachers."

Such being the state of things, we repeat that it is not to be wondered at that the Free Church was the first in Scotland to feel the strain of the times in connection with Biblical inquiry.

In 1870 a brilliant young student, who had carried all before him at the university, was appointed Professor of Hebrew in the Free Church College, Aberdeen. His professional studies necessarily brought

him into contact with the revolutionary school of Biblical critics, who were then causing some stir in Holland and Germany. It seemed to him that what they had to say about the authorship and composition of the books of the Old Testament had a great deal of truth in it, and, without considering very seriously beforehand what was likely to be the effect of his reproducing with approbation the same views in Scotland, he published in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* an article in which the traditions of his Church were deliberately set aside, and such an account given of the construction of the Bible as seemed to many to be inconsistent with the idea of its inspiration.

This incident became the signal for the outbreak of a controversy which lasted for several years, and which ended in the dismissal of the professor, Dr. Robertson Smith, from his chair in 1881.

We shall not enter into the merits of the controversy here. It is enough to say that it convulsed the Church while it lasted, and did not leave it quite what it had been when it closed. Many supported Professor Smith, not because they in the least agreed with his opinions, but because they believed that the ends of truth will be best served by leaving Biblical science, like any other science, to work freely in its own field. These distinguished between his "discoveries" and his "speculations," and were not moved from their former position in any way. But the popular impression produced was not quite so innoc-

uous. The Old Testament was thenceforth regarded by some as not so supreme an authority as had been supposed; its contents came to be handled in a less reverential manner than formerly; and, encouraged by the freer atmosphere into which they were introduced, one and another began to plead for progress also in theology. In short, the controversy brought out the fact that a Broad School had grown up in even the Free Church, and would be found telling in future in its councils.*

The Biblical controversy was in full flood in the Free Church when the United Presbyterian Church also was made to feel the pressure of the time. In January 1877 the Rev. David Macrae, then of Gourrock, moved in his Presbytery for a readjustment of the relations between his Church and the Westminster Confession. The line which he took was to a large extent the same as that along which Dr. James Morison proceeded in 1841. He objected to the Calvinistic doctrines of election, and particular redemption, and depravity, etc.; but the point upon which he chiefly insisted was that the Confession does not teach the truth of Scripture on the subject of eternal punishment. The final result of his maintaining opinions in that last connection inconsistent with the teaching of his Church, was that in the summer of 1879 he was separated from his charge and declared to be no

* "The New Lines and the Old; or, The Evangelical Outlook in Scotland. In some Letters from a Scot at Home to a Scot Abroad." London: Nisbet and Co.

longer a minister of the United Presbyterian Church. But the movement which he originated was not without its effects, and his friends did not speak altogether without warrant when they described as follows the course of events :—

“Mr. Macrae’s speech was condemned, and his motion rejected, by the Presbytery; but the hour had come for reform, and the movement could not be suppressed. Within two months the Rev. Fergus Ferguson had tabled a motion in the Presbytery of Glasgow embodying another formidable indictment against the Subordinate Standards. A few months more saw the supreme court of the United Presbyterian Church appointing a Revision Committee; and now, within three years of the inception of the movement, the Declaratory Act, which registers an enormous theological advance, is part of the creed of the Church.” *

We say that there was some warrant for these sentences, but we would decidedly underline the word *some*. The assertion that the Declaratory Act adopted registered “an *enormous theological advance*” is an enormous exaggeration. It was well that it satisfied the restless spirits in the denomination and allowed them to proceed with their proper work, but we are certain that the Declaration is one which could have been signed by such old-fashioned theologians as Chalmers and M’Cheyne. How far Mr. Macrae’s

* “The Macrae Case,” p. 20. Glasgow: John S. Marr and Sons.

peculiar views about retribution have spread it is impossible to guess. He has now for a number of years been ministering to a congregation in Dundee, but there have as yet appeared no signs of his having attracted many disciples to himself or of his founding a new sect.

The year following that which saw the end of "the Macrae Case" witnessed an event which ought to have produced an immensely greater sensation. That was the publication of "The Scotch Sermons,"* in the preface to which it was announced that they contained specimens of "a style of preaching which increasingly prevails amongst the clergy of the Scottish (Established) Church." Among the contributors to this volume were men of the highest mark in the denomination, headed by the principal of one of our universities and a professor of theology. It is pretty plain that the authors overshot their mark. They miscalculated the amount of progress which had been made in their direction in the country, and the book has been allowed to die. But it is a significant circumstance that a work in comparison with which the famous "Essays and Reviews" was a temperate production,† and in which all the "heresies" of Macrae and Robertson Smith are calmly assimilated, awakened

* "Scotch Sermons," 1880. London: Macmillan and Co.

† As a sample of its advanced character we quote a sentence:—"Between *our purely animal ancestors* and the savage who was first subdued by the glory of the sky and the mystery of life, there was an interval as great as that which separates the latter from ourselves."

so little anxiety and alarm in the Church from which it issued, that only one of the contributors was called to account for what he said, and he was rebuked very mildly. We may attach too much importance to the drift of this straw; but that it means something will readily be conceded, and the friends of evangelical religion may well be excused if they think with a little concern of the fact that two of the preachers of the "Scotch Sermons" have since had intrusted to them the training of candidates for the ministry.*

It is a striking testimony to the practical character of the Scottish Churches that the convulsions they pass through from time to time do not paralyze them. After a while they go on again as before. It would indeed be folly to try to believe that the movements we have been describing have left no permanent marks behind them. It is absolutely certain that that is not the case. But whatever changes may have been wrought upon their principles or position, their activities have never been for long interrupted, and all of them are now as busy as if they had never been disturbed.

* Professor Story of Glasgow and Principal Cunningham of St Andrews. Two of the sermons were contributed by Principal Caird.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MOODY AND SANKEY VISITS.

The man and his history—Arrival in England—Invited to Scotland—Work in Edinburgh—In the country—Glasgow—His message—Second visit—Effect on our religious environment—Brightening of our song.

FEW have been honoured of God to do more good work of the highest kind in the world than the great American evangelist. Mr. Moody is not a loquacious man. His addresses are generally short. In society he is silent. He has never taken the trouble to defend himself against the numerous attacks that have been made upon him. And he is seldom heard talking about his methods. But he is a broad-shouldered, sagacious, self-possessed, capable man; and, apart from that wonderful something with which he has been endowed—unction, spiritual power, call it what you will—he would unquestionably have told influentially on his generation.

Born at Northfield, Massachusetts, in 1837, he was left fatherless at four, and, being one of a large family, and poor, his early advantages were few. At seven-

teen he went to Boston, where, in a boot and shoe shop, he showed such business capacity that his success in the world seemed assured. But a great spiritual change came over him in 1853, and from that date his heart was given to Christian work. To find more scope for his energies he moved to Chicago, and there his evangelistic efforts grew to be so conspicuous that he was invited to leave his secular occupation and take charge of a territorial mission.

His first visit to England was paid in 1872, when he attended the Mildmay Conference. What he saw then awakened in him a strong desire to return, and he again landed on our shores in June 1873. He did not come without an invitation. Mr. Pennefather had urged him to return, but on his arrival he learned to his sorrow that that good man had just died. At the request, however, of the York Young Men's Christian Association, he proceeded to the north of England, and there, along with Mr. Sankey, who had been his fellow-traveller from America, he held meetings in several towns with more or less acceptance.

It was while he was in Newcastle that he was heard of in Edinburgh. "Mr. Kelman of Leith," Mr. Macpherson tells us,* "learning from his brother, who had witnessed the awakening at Newcastle, the true character of the movement, was so deeply impressed that he could find no rest until he visited the scene

* "Revival and Revival Work," p. 67. By Rev. John Macpherson. London: Morgan and Scott.

of the work and examined it for himself. The features by which, on previous information, he had been most struck, assumed still greater prominence under personal observation. The incisive and trenchant preaching of Moody, together with the intelligent and impressive singing of the gospel by Sankey, seemed to produce the most satisfactory spiritual results; for the blessing of God, in the gracious operation of the Spirit, obviously rested on the work. Having asked the promise of the evangelists to visit Edinburgh, he returned home, and in connection with Mr. [now Dr.] J. H. Wilson, minister of the Barclay Church, proceeded to enlist the aid and sympathy of the other ministers of the city.....In preparation for the visit a prayer-meeting was held once a week in the Craigie Hall for some time, and afterwards daily in the Upper Queen Street Hall. In point of fact, the awakening began here. Such was the conscious nearness to God, such the sense of divine help in prayer, such and so manifest the answers vouchsafed, such the blending of hearts in unity and love, and such the deep solemnity that rested on the meetings day by day, that those who attended say it formed one of the most memorable periods of life to them."

The evangelists reached Edinburgh on the 22nd of November 1873, and it is the simple truth that they had not been long there till the whole city was stirred. Day after day the Free Assembly Hall and other places were crowded to their utmost capacity by

people eager to hear ; and such visible impression was produced that only those who were determined to disbelieve could doubt for a moment the gracious and supernatural character of the work.

But the awakening was not confined to Edinburgh. The news of what was occurring there brought multitudes from all parts of the country to see for themselves. These carried back the fire, and there came to be reproduced in Scotland a state of things similar to that which was witnessed in America in 1858, when no town or village could be entered which had not its earnest prayer-meeting.

To quote again from Mr. Macpherson :—"During 1874 the movement, while it seemed to lose nothing in point of intensity, gained in strength day by day. The quietest schools were stirred, the dullest churches were moved. Every sermon had its reference to the work, every prayer its special burden. Every newspaper had its paragraph, in which, for the most part, criticism was somehow disarmed. Every traveller had his story. In the train, in the busy mart, on 'Change, no place was too secular, no business too pressing, no company too gay, to exclude all reference to the topic of the day. Everywhere the new Songs of Zion fell upon your ear. The streets and highways were full of earnest conversation on the work of grace and the way of life. I have seen a group of children, the oldest not more than twelve, engaged in solemn converse upon the street, and overheard one explaining

to the rest the plan of salvation by Jesus, who died for sinners."

Nor was it only Scotland which was stirred. "In the great cities of England and Ireland prayer-meetings, some of them daily, were established, so great was the interest awakened. Abroad, on the Continent of Europe, in America, in the West Indies, in South Africa, in all the British colonies, in India, and in China, men were deeply impressed by the tidings of the revival.....At a meeting in Dundee, the Rev. John Fordyce of Simla stated that when he left Northern India, early in the year 1874, the dry bones were stirring under the life-giving breath of the Holy Spirit. When he reached Southern India, the same phenomena met his eye. On going on board ship, he found the spirit of earnest inquiry stirring there. On reaching London, he entered a church and found a revival in progress. At Edinburgh he witnessed the heart-moving indications of the remarkable work of grace. Passing northwards to Aberdeen, he found the daily meeting for prayer, saints rejoicing, and sinners pressing into the kingdom of God. Retiring for a little to a quiet rural parish in Aberdeenshire, what was his astonishment to find a spiritual awakening in full tide. 'Such,' he added, 'is the might of the Spirit.' In all this we perceive a little instalment of the great promise yet to be fulfilled in all its divine vastness—'I will pour out my Spirit upon *all* flesh.' "

It would be vain to attempt to follow the evangelists in their course through the country during this memorable year. Suffice it to say that they left Edinburgh on the 21st of January and proceeded to Dundee, where a visible blessing also attended them. On February 8, they moved to Glasgow, and remained a month. First, night after night the large City Hall of the western metropolis was crowded. Next, the Kibble Palace was secured; but though capable of seating six thousand persons, it was found too small for the number of those who wished to be present. One evening a special meeting was held to receive young converts, when three thousand appeared, to profess that they had recently found the Lord. And when the farewell gathering took place, as many as thirty thousand assembled in and around the Palace, and Mr. Moody had to speak from a carriage. Paisley, Greenock, and Gourock were next visited; and then the evangelists proceeded to the north of Scotland. In Aberdeen, Inverness, and elsewhere, the same signs followed—God always accompanying their message with demonstration of the Spirit. And when at last, in the beginning of September, they crossed the Channel to Ireland, they left behind them the grateful conviction that they had been sent in answer to prayer, and had been made the means of bringing a more widespread blessing to Scotland than it had perhaps ever before enjoyed.

Moody's gospel was identical with M'Cheyne's.

There was positively nothing novel about it. "The three R's—Ruin by the Fall, Redemption by the Cross, and Regeneration by the Holy Spirit—were fully recognized and clearly taught. For man, fallen, guilty, helpless, lost, there is no salvation but in the grace of God. No removal of the least stain of guilt but by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. From the thralldom of sin there is no escape but through the power of the Holy Ghost. Man's works have no merit; his wisdom, his strength, his righteousness are of no avail. Every mouth is stopped before God. The efficacy of the blood of Christ, the exceeding glory and worth of his mediatorial sacrifice, have been constantly extolled. The marvellous love of God in the gift of his Son, the riches of divine grace, and the omnipotence of the Father's arm in the salvation of sinners, formed a never-ceasing theme. The absolute necessity of being born again, the grace, work, and power of the Holy Spirit, were both the burden of frequent teaching and the burden of incessant prayer. The holiness of God, judgment to come, heaven and hell, have been set forth in the light of Scripture. The sanctities of the Christian life as flowing from the grace of God in the heart—truth, uprightness, purity, meekness, benevolence, and fruitfulness in every branch of Christian activity—have never been overlooked.....The preaching of the Cross, which to many is foolishness, was often manifestly the power of God unto salvation. The simple, un-

adorned statement of the great Bible truth, the very heart and soul of the gospel, the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God, was reiterated with primitive plainness and divine unction. The 'theology of the blood,' so offensive in the ears of many, was accompanied with such power that scarcely did the dog of rationalism dare to wag its tongue." *

The fact is worth emphasizing: What may be described on various accounts as one of the most remarkable general awakenings which Scotland has experienced throughout all its religious history, arose and was maintained in connection with the preaching of the theology of the Westminster Confession.

The visit of 1874 was not the only one which Moody and Sankey paid to this country. They returned some years afterwards (in 1881) by special invitation. But although much good was then done by them, the impression produced and the fruit gathered were not to be compared with those which attended their earlier labours. In the former case, the stream sprang, as it were, naturally, as from a fountain; in the latter, it appeared, so far, as the result of mechanical arrangement. †

* "Revival and Revival Work," pp. 134, 135.

† Perhaps some readers may think that this is hardly a just account of the character of the second visit, and we gladly append a note addressed to us by Professor Simpson of Edinburgh. "It all the time," he writes, "seemed to me as if we had never got quite ready for him, or got wakened up here to help. Perhaps it was partly because Mr. Moody set to work in a different way. The first time, he went up and down the town to different congregations, and from each some were gathered and set to work. The last time, he kept to the Assembly Hall and the Corn

By the two visits, however, our whole religious condition has been affected. Evangelistic work has now become a habit in all the churches, and it is no longer an exceptional and extraordinary thing to hear of "missions," or weeks of meetings, or to be told that in such and such localities there have been revivals. It is even asserted by some that there is a risk of this mode of Christian work being overdone. Men have become evangelists who had little fitness for the office; services, providing entertainment rather than edification, have been preferred to the sober worship of the sanctuary; and a taste has been created which, if it is too much fostered, may end in a demand that the Church shall be reformed after the model of the Salvation Army. But these are only the excrescences of a movement which has imparted to our whole organization more life and activity and effectiveness, and given an immense impulse to spiritual religion.

Exchange, and there were probably many more gathered in from the class among which Carrubbers Close Mission is doing so much good. But there was not nearly so much stir in the Christian community, nor did there seem to be so many started out on the Christian enterprise, as at first visit. But, you remember, he gave Glasgow a longer visit. The workers there had got themselves ready to help him, and I always have the impression that the kind of rescue work that was done in Glasgow was greater than anything that had been previously done. And you must bear in mind that London got the best of him in that last visit. I think he worked all the winter of 1882-83 there, taking one part of the city after another. It was at that time that the Studds and some of that class got wakened up, and his visits to Oxford and Cambridge had to do with the movement that afterwards began among the students, and which by-and-by touched us when Smith and Studd came three years ago. I suppose you know that Drummond learned his evangelism from Moody, and the two men have an intense love and admiration for each other."

Especially do we owe to the Moody movement the brightening of our service of song. Sankey's hymns may not be of unfathomable depth, and accomplished singers may scoff at them and say that you soon get to the end of the best of them. But this is undeniable, that they have gone to the hearts of the great mass of our Christian people, and that they have largely helped to cherish the life which the movement was the means of conveying.

CHAPTER VIII.

RELIGIOUS INTEREST IN THE UNIVERSITIES.

The Americanizing of our religious methods—Professor Drummond—His experience and question—His mode of preaching the gospel—Its wisdom suspected—The “soul” and the “life”—The dynamic power of Christ—Old and new evangelism.

WE have said that it is no longer an uncommon thing to hear of a work of grace going on in this part of the country and the other. Scotland in that respect has come to resemble America, where local revivals are incidents of constant experience. We are warranted to believe that the change thus implied has been on the whole a beneficial one. It does not, indeed, follow that in those days when there was little outward excitement, and no inquiry-rooms, and no protracted meetings, and no professed evangelists, conversions were few and the power of religion feeble. Our Church history tells a different story. God has always had a people among us who were prepared to testify and suffer for his sake. We do well also to remember what a wise American divine, the late Dr. Alexander of Princeton, has said. “It has occurred to

me," he remarks—"and I have heard the same sentiment from some of the most judicious and pious men that I have known—that there must be a state of the Church preferable to these temporary excitements, which are too often followed by a deplorable state of declension and disgraceful apathy and inactivity. Why not aim at having a continuous lively state of piety, and an increasing progress in the conversion of the impenitent, without these dreadful seasons of deadness and indifference? Why may we not hope for such a state of increasing prosperity in the Church that *revivals* shall be no longer needed; or, if you prefer the expression, when there shall be a perpetual revival?"

At the same time, the testimony which comes to us from America, with reference to the value of these special times of refreshing, is far too weighty and suggestive to be disregarded.

No name has a more honourable place in the records of religious life in the New World than that of the late Bishop McIlvaine of Ohio, and here is what he says: "Whatever I possess in religion, began in a revival; and the most precious, steadfast, and vigorous fruits of my ministry have been the fruits of revivals."

"But for revivals," writes another minister, Dr. Porter, a Congregationalist—"but for revivals, as it seems to me, the Church would well-nigh have ceased to exist, or have lost her distinctive character in the spirit of the world."

"It has been remarked," says Dr. Sprague,* "by a minister who has probably been more conversant with genuine revivals than any other of his age, that his experience has justified the remark that there is a smaller proportion of apostasies among the professed subjects of revivals than among those who make a profession when there is no unusual attention to religion."

"If I were asked," says Dr. Baird,† "why revivals are so frequent in America and so rare in Europe, my first answer would be, that Christians on our side of the Atlantic expect them, and on the other they do not expect them. These seasons of 'refreshing from on high' are part of the blessing that rested on our fathers; and the events of the last forty years especially have taught us that if we seek their continuance in the spirit of those with whom they commenced, we shall never seek in vain. Nor is there anything to confine them within our own borders. They have been carried by our missionaries to a number of Indian tribes. Our stations in Ceylon have been repeatedly visited with the effusions of the Holy Spirit, and the Sandwich Islands, in 1839-40, were favoured with one of the most glorious dispensations of divine grace that the world has ever witnessed."

We have then no cause to regret that our habits have so far been Americanized.

* "Lectures on Revivals."

† "Religion in America." By Robert Baird. New York: Harpers.

But the very fact that revivals have now, if we may so say, become naturalized among us, renders it unnecessary that we should dwell particularly on all our more recent spiritual experiences. Though in various towns—Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen, for example—and in connection with different evangelists, movements have taken place which in other days would have awakened widespread interest and attention, none of them have presented any feature that was novel, and to repeat the story of them would be simply monotonous.

One work of grace, however, occurring since Mr. Moody's visit, must not be thus passed by in a sentence. We refer to the movement among the students of our universities. Those who have been directing it have rather shunned than courted publicity, and our information about it is not very perfect. But it is understood that the interest was first awakened by the addresses of the Cambridge men, Studd and Smith, whose manliness was vouched for by their reputation as athletes, and who spoke to their fellows in a frank and downright way without (as was said) the "whine" of the professional evangelist. The impression they produced was followed up by several of the professors in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and by other like-minded men of earnestness and culture, who saw in the opening an opportunity to preach the gospel specially to the educated classes.

Among those who took a lead in this effort to

reach the students, Professor Drummond of the Free Church College, Glasgow, was conspicuous. He had for long taken an interest in evangelistic work; he was known to be the author of a work which has had an enormous circulation; and while his speech was choice in respect of literary form, it was seasoned with the salt of that unction which gives to religious appeals their spiritual power. His own proper sphere was Glasgow; but it was in Edinburgh that his influence proved greatest and his gathered fruit most abundant. Sabbath after Sabbath he addressed large audiences, of students only, in the Oddfellows' Hall, and every night numbers of inquirers remained behind to be further guided. From this place as a centre, deputations went forth to visit the other university seats; and although we have no means of knowing the numerical results, we have reason to believe that the number of the converts, especially in the department of medicine, was very considerable.

What is of peculiar interest in this connection is, that Professor Drummond thinks he has had some new light shed by his experiences on the subject of evangelization. He has not, indeed, been in haste to obtrude his views on the Church. We have learned more of what he thinks about things from America than from any discourses of his here. But upon one point he has spoken in his own city. When Dr. Joseph Parker was in Glasgow in the winter of 1886-7, a conference took place in which methods

of Christian work were discussed. Mr. Drummond's name was not on the programme, but he was present; and Dr. Marshall Lang, who was in the chair, invited him to say a few words. He accepted the invitation, but stated he would only *mention a fact and ask a question*. The fact was this, that in his large experience of recent revival movements *the deep convictions of sin which characterized former revivals were not apparent*; and the question was, *Was it because the Holy Spirit had changed his mode of operation?*

Professor Drummond did not answer his own question, but that he would have replied in the affirmative, if he had been pressed, may be assumed from the method in which he has been presenting the gospel. He has not, as we understand, preached the law; he has not sought very specially to arouse his hearers to a sense of guilt; he has not tried to awaken in them a feeling of alarm about their souls; he has not dwelt on the wrath to come, or on the attractions of heaven. But finding men unhappy, dissatisfied, and ignorant of what they need, he has held up Christ before them as their rest, and his service as the noblest they could engage in. "The commonest phrase in all his addresses to young men," one of his greatest friends tells us, "is '*your life*.' He is always speaking to them about their '*life*,' when other preachers speak to people about their '*souls*.' (*Note, in the New Testament these words are interchangeable.*) He makes young men feel that their life (that is, the time they

are to live through, and what it is filled with) is a great thing,—in fact, the one precious and priceless thing they have to deal with. They may squander it, or they may make it a great gift to God and the world; and accordingly as they do the one or the other, it will be either a hurtful or a beneficent influence added to the whole of human history. Christ and the devil (or Christ and the world—Christ and self) are competing which is to get this gift from every one; and Drummond says, Give it to Christ. Instead of saying to men, ‘You have sinned,’ he gets the advantage of fresh phraseology by speaking of their ‘bad past,’ or telling them they know they are losing their ‘life.’ Instead of speaking of sanctification, he bids them look forward to a big, satisfying, influential life. The means by which this change from the old to the new life takes place is by contact with Christ, who cleanses, rehabilitates, and sustains the life. Drummond is very strong on the necessity of regeneration, and preaches Christ with great warmth and power as the Friend in whose fellowship moral and spiritual strength is obtained. No one, I should imagine, has read as much as I have of the criticism which has been poured forth against his book; and this I venture to say with perfect certainty, that the reproach he has had to bear from all his really able opponents is simply the reproach of believing fully in the evangelical doctrine of the new birth. The reading of these criticisms has been quite a revelation to

me as to the extent to which this doctrine is disbelieved and despised by able men in the Churches supposed to be evangelical."

At Mr. Moody's conference during the past autumn (1887), no one was so welcome a guest as Professor Drummond. Many other distinguished men were there, but all were made to give way to the Scottish evangelist; and on one occasion, at least, while the rest of the speakers were restricted as to time, Mr. Drummond was told he might speak all night if he chose. Mr. Moody is much too cautious a man to commit himself hastily to a new proposition, and we have not seen or heard what he thought of the question raised in Glasgow. But Mr. Sankey is less reticent, and we have been told that he made no secret of his inclining to believe that the Holy Spirit has changed in our day his mode of operation; and that while formerly those who became concerned about religion felt that they were down in a miry pit, now, in similar circumstances, people rather feel themselves looking up to an ideal far above them, which they cannot reach till Christ lifts them up to it.

We have anything but a disposition to examine Professor Drummond's views and methods in a critical spirit. We know, because we have felt, that a spiritual power accompanies his preaching. We know, also, in the directest way—from the testimony of those who have been brought to Christ by his means—that for some, at any rate, his mode of presenting

the gospel was the most suitable. At the same time, we have in the movement which he represents a novelty in Scottish evangelism, and it would not be just not to give it serious consideration.

Well, the first thing that occurs to us to say is that it appears much too large a deduction even to *suggest* as capable of being drawn from the experience of a single movement, that the Holy Ghost has changed in our time his modes of operation. Neander, in the Introduction to his Church History, brings out in a striking way at how many points in the Greek and Roman and Jewish worlds Christianity met the needs and aspirations of men; and it is not surprising that, since "in Christ all the rays of an ideal excellence are concentrated"—and this was the aspect in which Professor Drummond delighted to present the gospel—he should have found a response in the hearts of many young men just starting on their career as students. As another professor, who saw much of this work, puts it: "He got alongside a class who had never been effectively evangelized before. The young fellows have, of course, been in the way of hearing gospel addresses, but only from men of whom they think that it was their business, or had become their 'fad,' to preach. But now they heard the same kind of language to which they are accustomed in their class-rooms. I have never heard anything in all his meetings that was inconsistent with anything that I know of the truth as it is in Jesus; but he pur-

posely kept off the use of phrases which many of his hearers had set down in their minds as cant expressions." This fresh style of presenting the truth was naturally fitted to interest.

Is it not possible, however, that if with equal earnestness and power he had spoken of sin and judgment to come, he would have touched at least as many hearts, and brought as many to the Saviour? And if that had been the result, there would have been just as little occasion as in the other case to speak of the experience as indicative of a fixed habit in the method of the divine administration. There have always been "diversities of operation," and the variety which Professor Drummond has observed marks no suspension that we can see in the common law.

We confess to having even a little more difficulty about the form in which Professor Drummond appeals to the unconverted. His use of the word "life" instead of "soul" is, of course, perfectly legitimate. The one term is as scriptural as the other. And it is a most reasonable and searching question which he is in the habit of putting when he asks about our "bad past" (that is, our unprofitable past), and whether we intend to use our potentialities for the future in a like miserable way. But in listening to him the feeling is sometimes produced that he is seeking to make us think of sin rather as a *mean* thing, an *unworthy* thing, an *ignoble* thing, a something with which nobody would wish to have to

do who had any self-respect, than as an offence against a just and holy God; and that thus he is unconsciously playing into the hands of those very "rational" religious teachers who are for ever insisting that to think about a world to come is a waste of energy, and that what alone concerns us is to attend to our duties here. We say "unconsciously," because we are assured, in the most emphatic way, that he does not himself minimise the hopes and fears of the world to come. The life he calls to is always urgently shown to be the Eternal Life that will outlast this creation. We are considering here, however, the question of whether the plan adopted by him is one to be recommended in these times for general imitation. And that we doubt for various reasons.

Sin is a mean thing, most certainly, and it is one way to produce "conviction" to make that felt. It is also true that to use well (in the highest sense) our "life" here is the best preparation for the life to come. But nobody who knows anything about the religious literature of our time can help being aware of what has again and again followed from a too exclusive presentation of this aspect of sin, and from the tendency to underrate as factors in our life the hopes and fears that are inspired by the thought of an eternity.

So strangely subtle are the workings of the human heart that in some of those who have been moved by appeals to live a noble life there have sprung up,

along with a certain amount of humiliation for the past, the weeds of a hurtful self-righteousness. For have they not, they ask, some cause to congratulate themselves that they have had that in them which has responded to such appeals? These may be extreme cases; but this is not uncommon, that men who have seen sin chiefly as ignoble have been slow to feel it as guilt in the sight of God, deserving of his wrath and curse, and needing an atonement, and have, as a matter of fact, become content to remain, though in a higher sense, citizens of the world.

Here, for example, is how one of the contributors to the "Scotch Sermons" puts it:—"To whatever world death introduces you, the best conceivable preparation for it is to labour for the highest good of the world in which you live. Be the change which death brings what it may, he who has spent his life in trying to make this world better can never be unprepared for another."

It was our hap once to sojourn for a little in the parish of one who, in his ministry, had harped constantly on that string. He had just left his country charge for a city; but he had left behind him a very definite reputation, and one of the things confidently said about him was *that he had taught from the pulpit that there is no immortality*. This we could not believe, and we sought for an explanation, which was given with perfect confidence by an intelligent parishioner. It was to this effect, — that he had

spoken so continually of making the best of the present life, and had so studiously avoided reference to the soul and introducing considerations drawn from a world to come, that his people had arrived at the conclusion that in his opinion there was no world to come at all.

We fancy that we see the like drift in the account more recently given by one young minister—and given with apparent approbation—of the preaching of a contemporary :—

“He had a clear conception of the gospel,” are his words, “as the divine method of helping men to live the life of Christian manhood in this world. His mission was to teach people to trust in God and do the right through Jesus Christ the Saviour.”

We know that Professor Drummond’s conception of religion is a far higher one than this, and that the life which he asks young men to consecrate to Christ is one whose sphere is commensurate with their immortality. But believing, as we do, that to move a man to walk worthy of God in this world, it is necessary for him to bear in mind the judgment and its issues, and to “look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God,” we think with some doubt of the proposed change of phraseology, and have no confidence that good would come of Professor Drummond’s method in this connection being generally adopted.

On two points Mr. Drummond insists with uncom-

promising earnestness—namely, the necessity of regeneration, and that the new life is to be received only through personal dealing with Christ. His belief in reference to the first of these positions has been mightily strengthened by his scientific inquiries. He has found it to be true in the natural world that for any creature to pass up into a higher kingdom than that to which it belongs, there is needed direct divine intervention; and this natural law he is taught by Scripture to trace in the spiritual world also. “*Ye must be born again*,” therefore—which to so many philosophers has appeared a figure or a bit of transcendentalism—is to him a scientific verity.

There is some ground, however, for saying that his science has been occasionally a source of embarrassment to him. Whether it is true or not, about the whole argument of his book, that he has sought to prove identity where there is only analogy, this is certainly true, that his familiarity with scientific processes has sometimes affected in curious ways his opinions on religious questions.

For example, on asking one who had heard him frequently, and who is himself an accomplished theologian, on what Professor Drummond appeared to him to depend for producing spiritual impressions, we received at once the unhesitating reply, “*On the dynamic power of Christ*.” “Do you mean,” we inquired, “the attraction lying in his character?” “Far more than that,” was the answer: “he evidently

believes that in holding up Christ he is putting in the way of being used a divine force which acts with a mysterious energy on the souls of men."

The remarkable language we have quoted was not Professor Drummond's own; the influence exerted on him by his scientific habits was in this case only noticed by a hearer. But there was a curious illustration of the same sort of thing we are now noticing in one of his American experiences. The question was raised of how a certain class of evangelists could be better employed than they were, and his theory was that their place was not the church, or the assembly room, or the street, but *the cellar*, in which, after the manner of a battery, they could help to generate the spiritual force that was required outside. Here, too, the power of the "natural law in the spiritual world" was plainly felt—the divine something which converts have, being to him a species of heavenly electricity.

Nothing can be said against the legitimacy of the similitude. It is one which has been often employed in the pulpit, and has served there once and again a useful purpose. There is, indeed, a mystical power in Christ, to the reality of which all true believers can testify. More than that, we are strongly persuaded that if Professor Drummond's method in this connection were more followed in some respects our preaching would be more fruitful. "He differs," writes one who has heard him often, "from a good many of his

fellow-preachers—and I think it is a great part of his power—in *preaching Christ*, while they preach about Christ. He insists (I think this is his favourite quotation) that it is Eternal Life to *know* the Father and the Son. *They* too often are satisfied if they get their hearers to know something *about* Christ's person and work." But there is withal an obvious danger attendant on the undue use of such analogies.

One is a temptation to forget, that what corresponds to electric force in the natural world is not something that resides as a quality or attribute in Christ, but is *the personal influence* of the Holy Ghost; and another is a tendency to lose sight of the fact that saving faith is not merely an attraction of the soul to Christ, like the irresistible gravitation of a smaller body to a larger, but is an intelligent apprehension and assurance of the fact that in Christ all our needs are satisfactorily met.

Professor Drummond is not one who sympathizes with the sneers which have been directed against "theology." That science, like other sciences, may be abused. Things may be assumed in it to have been discovered which are still unknown, and among its "dogmas" may be propositions which are only half truths at the best. But, after all, it is a science—a science with a noble sphere, and one which we must know something of if we are to have any rest. As reasoning beings, we can never be satisfied with a Saviour whose "dynamic power" only we have felt.

We must know all that can be known about him. For the satisfaction of our intellects, not to speak of our consciences, we must be told what he has done as our Saviour, and *how that meets our case*. It is not his person alone that requires to be presented to a sinner, it is *his work*. And impossible, for example, as it may be to explain all about the atonement, some theory of the atonement is indispensable, since it is not easy to conceive of a convinced sinner coming to have an intelligible peace apart from it.

That Professor Drummond holds and proclaims the fundamentals is certain; and it is just as certain that the fruits of his work are genuine. But we should be sorry to hear of the old methods being forsaken for trust in "the dynamic power of Christ." That power we know to be nothing but the power of the Holy Spirit. The existence of that other agent, with a free will of his own, may easily come to be lost sight of; and in place of the Spirit's work in persuading and enabling sinners to embrace Jesus Christ as he is freely offered to us in the gospel, there may come, in an unenlightened age, to be recognized a sort of magical force acting upon the soul *ex opere operato*.

In favour of the old methods we have a long succession of testimonies from Pentecost downward, and we have seen no sufficient cause as yet to recommend a general resort to new expedients.

CHAPTER IX.

THE OUTLOOK.

Changed aspect of the country—Our better prospects—Mr. Spurgeon's concern—Ethical preaching—Professor Story—The old gospel—Bishop Ryle.

SINCE fifty years ago a very noticeable change has taken place on the ecclesiastical aspect of the country. To take but one locality. In the parish we know best there were in 1837 the parish church and a chapel of ease, along with two Secession congregations, one belonging to the Relief, the other to the Old Light Anti-Burghers. Now, in 1887, there are three Established churches, four Free churches, two United Presbyterian churches, one Baptist congregation, one Evangelical Union, one Wesleyan Methodist, one Original Secession, and one of the Salvation Army. The population has, of course, grown, but not by any means to such an extent as to require so immense an enlargement of accommodation.

In some respects this is rather a disheartening picture, suggesting as it does that sectarianism is rampant among us, and that energies are being ex-

pendent in civil conflicts which ought to be directed against the common enemy. But there are considerations which help so far to reconcile us to the state of things described. In the first place, it is plain that so many religious societies could not have been formed and so many new churches built without the presence of a great deal of life and earnestness. Secondly, although there are numerous interests, or "causes," in the district, giving legitimate scope to the predilections of individuals, there continues to be but one main stream, the Presbyterian—running meanwhile, indeed, in three channels, but these promising ere very long to coalesce. And thirdly, almost all the bodies named have so much in common that their members work together with immensely less of any feeling of disharmony than is experienced in the different schools of the Church of England.

Of course it is to be lamented that there is such a waste of energy going on in the land. In not a few places one church would better meet the wants of the inhabitants than the three which are provided; and it is melancholy to think that here and there all over the country men of ability are to be found who are either breaking their hearts under the pressure of contracted spheres, or, worse still, sinking into lethargy and indifference. But all the same, the former days were not better than these. What has been said of England is far more true of Scotland. "Though devoted pastoral work was far from uncommon in 1837, no

one will deny that it is indefinitely more common, more thorough, more sound, in 1887. The great towns have been divided up into parishes of comparatively manageable size; and though the increase of population still defies our efforts to overtake it, a visible impression has yet been made on vast human hives like Leeds, and even on the most densely crowded and impoverished quarters of London. The standard of clerical activity has been greatly raised, and the sense of pastoral duty immensely quickened.”*

Before 1837 the people of Glasgow had seen in St. John's, and elsewhere, how, under the inspiration of men like Chalmers, congregations might become hives of religious industry; and the example thus set was being slowly followed elsewhere. But it was later that the work began in the West Port and in the Wynds, and later still that the habit came to be formed in all living congregations of seeking to tell on the waste places around them. Fifty years ago there were many Scottish parishes in which there were no Sabbath schools, no Young Men's Christian Associations, no layman capable of taking part in a religious meeting, and in which no interest was taken by a single person in the evangelization of the world. Now a spirit of religious activity pervades more or less the whole land; and although the power of the world has also grown stronger, and sin abounds, and the number of the non-church-going continues to be

* “An Ecclesiastical Retrospect.” From the *Guardian* of June 23, 1887.

appalling, we have not a doubt that the prospects of Christianity in Scotland are at this moment far more hopeful than they were at the beginning of the half-century.

The one thing which is causing anxiety is the character of our modern preaching. If there is any truth in the forebodings of Mr. Spurgeon in regard to England, we cannot expect that we in Scotland shall be able entirely to escape the sweep of the tide. What he fears, evidently, is that there is coming over us in this country a blight similar to that which extinguished for a time the Puritanism of New England. We hope and believe that these apprehensions will not be realized. But in regard to the question of fact whether there is or not a current the tendency of which is away from Evangelicalism, it appears to us that a great many words might have been spared if the contending parties had come to an agreement beforehand as to what could be recognized as Evangelicalism. Dr. Clifford of London, in an able address on "The Religious Life of England during the Reign of Queen Victoria," speaks of a *return to Christ* as one of the features of the age. "Patent," he says, "to all of us stand out certain indisputable gains; the years are full of decided, widespread, and unmistakable progress toward the divine ideal presented in Christ Jesus." Now, in a sense, that is absolutely true. In no earlier period did there appear so many Lives of Christ, and never

has it been so common as of late for all sorts of earnest men to speak well of him. If, therefore, you consent to concede the title of "Evangelical" to all teachers in whose systems a chief place is given to Christ, then it is far from being true that Evangelicalism is decaying. But Mr. Spurgeon understands the term in the traditional, or, as we may fairly put it, the received sense; and if we accept his definition of the position, it is simply undeniable that the drift, in England at least, is away from it,—one very significant proof of this being furnished by the circumstance that in certain circles the title of "Evangelical" has become as distasteful as the title Protestant is to the Anglicans.*

* Since writing the above we have met the following sentences in a letter addressed by a well-known Congregational minister, the Rev. Henry Batchelor, to the *Nonconformist*. He refers to the correspondence called forth by Mr. Spurgeon's warnings about the "*Downgrade*." "One thing is apparent in this correspondence—namely, that we had better drop such epithets as 'Evangelical,' 'Puritan gospel,' and such like. They are being used to cover and accredit various departures from the gospel of Christ. Men are anxious to retain the name when they have parted company with the essence of what the name has always denoted. The time has come when men should proclaim what they believe, and let it be tested by the Word of God alone. The old designations mean nothing, and can be stretched or contracted to any dimensions. Even Dr. Mackennal, chairman of the Union, says, 'I use the word Evangelical in a broad sense. I do not think the forensic idea of justification, for example, would be welcome. But I am persuaded that our people generally regard Christ as the medium of the forgiveness of their sins.' Dr. Mackennal's 'broad' is a different 'broad' from that of many others. To the extent to which a 'forensic justification' is unwelcome, it is all the worse for 'our people.' This confession involves a great deal more than it avows. It implies a foregone reconstruction of our Saviour's whole redeeming work. When our Lord has been reduced to the 'medium of the forgiveness of sins,' in some vague and indefinite manner, a man has so far lost his hold on the gospel as set forth by its inspired expositors. To employ old names any longer is only playing a game at hide-and-seek. It is one of the infelicities of times of transition from better to worse."

Confining our attention, however, to Scotland, it will, we think, hardly be denied by any one who has been watching the currents here, that the exclusively evangelistic preaching which prevailed for a time has had the effect of producing a reaction. Those who were most forward in revival work knew perfectly well what the evangelical system in all its length and breadth required, and they did not forget to insist upon personal holiness as an essential in the Christian life. But there have always been men who have shown themselves incompetent to comprehend the gospel and its influences, and these in their fear for morality have fled from what they regarded as Antinomianism into the arms of legality. This alarm for righteousness has undoubtedly led to the appearance, even in most unexpected places, of a species of Neo-Moderatism. The grace of God in these quarters has ceased to be very prominently proclaimed, justification by faith is seldom heard of, little mention is made of pardon through the blood of Christ, and only far-away references are heard to such things as regeneration and conversion. On the other hand, the beauty of a good life is much enlarged upon, and the impression is conveyed that Christian congregations, as a rule, are already within the Wicket Gate, and only need a little guidance to get safely to the Celestial City.

To see the kind of thing into which this style of preaching has developed, the "Scotch Sermons" are

well worth studying. One of these, by Professor Story, is on "Christian Righteousness." In it he deliberately sweeps aside with scorn the teaching of his own Confession in regard to a sinner's justification, and virtually insists that every man must be his own Redeemer.

"If," says he, "I am honest in my desire to live the life of Christ, it is nothing to me to be told that his righteousness shall be imputed to me. Nay, were it so imputed, it would be a hindrance in my way. I should be inclined to say: Do not reckon that mine which is not mine. Do not call me righteous who am still unrighteous. Do not tempt me to think I have learned or done or suffered enough. I could go on unto perfection. I would know Christ and nothing of his righteousness except as I see it in Him, and try day by day to work it out in my own self till he is formed in me the hope of glory.....If I am wrongfully accused and brought to the bar of the Lord, I do not wish to get off with a verdict of *Not proven*. I wish to be discharged on full evidence that I am *Not guilty*."

We must respect the anxiety displayed by the writer of these sentences to prevent people from thinking lightly of the great business of their personal sanctification; but we confess we are incapable of sympathizing with his satisfaction in the prospect of standing in his own virtue at the bar of God!

But has this kind of preaching ceased? It appears

not. A writer in an English magazine* tells that during last summer he paid a visit to the cathedral of St. Giles in Edinburgh, and heard a sermon on the text, "God is love; and he that dwelleth in God dwelleth in love." "The text," says the stranger, "might have been chosen for the purpose of showing how possible it is to preach with taste and eloquence on the most glorious revelation of the divine grace without introducing even a passing reference to the work of redemption. It was a whittling away of the distinctive truths of the gospel. There were striking thoughts, expressed in chaste and eloquent language, as to the power of love in the common universal relations of life, and the chief object of the preacher apparently was to show that he who cultivated a loving spirit in these, dwelt in God and God in him. There was nothing to remind men that they were sinners, and that God had shown his love to them in the unspeakable Gift. This was the preaching of a popular preacher in the great church of the Establishment."

A similar impression was produced on another English visitor, who happened to worship in a church in the west. "The sermon," he says, "taught, or seemed to teach, that Christ's chief end in coming here was to make men happy all round, and that our whole duty is to go and do likewise."

Nor is this style of preaching confined to one de-

* *The Congregational Review*, for October 1887.

nomination. A minister of the Free Church, who is well-known not to be a mere "ethical" preacher, has been moved, nevertheless, by his fear for the interests of righteousness to publish a volume of sermons in verse, which a newspaper, not remarkable for its religious earnestness, has been led to characterize in the following way:—"The religion they express is not of the sort that pours itself out in psalm and song. It is a very good sort of religion, nevertheless, and must not be condemned because it is not lyrical like David's or even like Sankey's. It is a religion of the mildly reflective and soberly practical sort, warmed not heated by human loving-kindness, and mellowed by what we may venture to call intellectual charity."

We confess to not expecting a great deal from preaching of that sort. Take it at its very best, is there any real inspiration in it? Is it instinct with any such spiritual force as to allow us to hope that we have in it what is to regenerate the world? He is a very sanguine man who thinks so. If the history of Scottish religion teaches us anything, it is this, that our surest dependence for abiding religious results is on the old gospel which Knox preached, and the Erskines, and Haldane, and Chalmers, and M'Cheyne.

Of course, the grace of God may be so proclaimed as to lead to license. That has happened before, and may happen again. But instead of it being true that the doctrine of justification through the imputation to a believer of the righteousness of Christ neces-

sarily or naturally leads to indifference about holy living, the very reverse can be demonstrated to be the case. To affirm so much, in fact, is to evidence at once ignorance of the nature of the gospel, and blindness to the testimony of religious experience. The holiest men the world has ever seen have been those who were most profoundly conscious of their own demerit, and all whose hopes for the future rested on the mercy of God and the mediation of Jesus Christ. The very morality of such men has been of a higher kind than that of their critics; their whole lives being offered as a Eucharistic sacrifice to their Divine Redeemer. This is what they have said,—

“O thou bleeding Lamb,
The true morality is love of thee.”

At the same time, while saying all this it is not necessary to insist on the perfection of the form in which evangelical doctrine has in any particular period been stated. We believe it to be true, indeed, what some one has affirmed, that for many, “Calvinism” is simply a nickname for the gospel. People who talk of it as if it were an exploded system forget how it has woven itself into the life of the world. Lutheranism has extended influentially but little beyond Germany. Calvinism has permeated most of Europe and America,* and has been a forma-

* Bancroft says: “He that will not honour the memory and respect the influence of Calvin, knows but little of the origin of American liberty.” Ranke says: “John Calvin was virtually the founder of

tive power in all modern thought ; a mighty factor, not only in religion, but in philosophy, literature, science, and social life. It is readily admitted, however, that there is such a thing as hyper-Calvinism—a presentation of unquestionable truth in such a way as to provoke a justifiable revolt. And there ought to be no difficulty in conceding that “the fundamentals” may be held, though different views are taken as to the application of particular doctrines. Andrew Fuller was long held in bondage because he was taught to believe that the gospel offer was made only to the elect. Is it wonderful that he by-and-by rebelled and became one of the most earnest advocates of free grace ? And if others insist that there is a universal as well as a particular reference in the atonement ; that it is not true to say of the actions of unconverted men that they cannot be good in any sense ; and that we ought not to be held bound to believe that any infants are lost,—it would be a serious business to affirm regarding such that they had necessarily ceased to adhere to the Evangelical or Calvinistic system.

But there are certain points which, because they are Pauline as well as Calvinistic, we cannot consent to leave open—such as the divine sovereignty, elec-

America.” Froude, the English historian, says : “ John Calvin has done more for constitutional liberty than any other man.” Dr. Philip Schaff says : “ The principles of the Republic of the United States can be traced through the intervening link of Puritanism to Calvinism, which, with all its theological rigour, has been the chief educator of manly character and promoter of constitutional freedom in modern times.”

tion, human depravity, the atonement, particular redemption, justification by faith, regeneration by the Holy Ghost, the free offer of the gospel, salvation by Christ alone, and a new obedience the spring of which is love. About these can be no compromise. When they cease to be preached in Scotland, the glory of its religious life will have departed.

It is a great satisfaction to know that the most powerful preacher in Edinburgh at this day is never ashamed to proclaim his continued faith in the Puritan theology—setting forth Christ, not as a dynamic force in contact with which a life is given producing the righteousness which justifies us, but as “the propitiation for our sins.” That is the Evangelicalism which has done most for the world. And we heartily hope that it is going to remain with us. “For, after all,” as Bishop Ryle says, “when modern scoffers at ‘old paths’ and worn-out creeds have had their say, there remain some stern facts which can never be explained away, and some questions which can only receive one answer.

“I ask boldly, What extensive good has ever been done in the world, except by the theology of the old paths? and I confidently challenge a reply, because I know that none can be given. I affirm unhesitatingly that there never has been any spread of the gospel, any conversion of nations or countries, any successful evangelistic work, except by the old-fashioned, distinct doctrines of the early Christians and the Reformers.

I invite any opponent of dogmatic theology to name a single instance of a country or town or people which has ever been Christianized by merely telling men that they must love one another, and be true, and just, and unselfish, and generous, and high-souled, and the like. No! no! no! Not one victory can such teaching show us, not one trophy can such teaching exhibit. It has wrought no deliverance on the earth. The victories of Christianity, wherever they have been won, have been won by distinct doctrinal theology: by telling men of Christ's vicarious death and sacrifice; by showing them Christ's substitution on the cross and his precious blood; by teaching them justification by faith, and bidding them believe on a crucified Saviour; by preaching ruin by sin, redemption by Christ, regeneration by the Spirit; by lifting up the brazen serpent; by telling men to look and live—to believe, repent, and be converted. This is the only teaching which, for eighteen centuries, God has honoured with success, and is honouring at the present day, both at home and abroad."

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